**Virtual SNREM Network Meeting Thursday 18th of June 2020**

Participants:

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| **Energy Engineering 8 – 10 am** | **Water/Civil Engineering 10 – 12am** |
| Dr. Arwa Abdelhay | Dr. Arwa Abdelhay |
| Dr. Laith Shalalfeh | Dr. Munjed Alsharif |
| Prof. Dr. Volker Siegismund, DHBW Mosbach | Eng. Fatimeh Hadidi |
| Prof. Dr. Jan Mugele, HWR Berlin | Prof. Dr. Torsten Schmidt, HSMS |
| Prof. Dr. Thomas Schönmuth, HSZG | Prof. Dr. Dörte Ziegler, HS Koblenz |
| Prof. Dr. Ralf Holzhauer, Westfälische HS | Prof. Dr. John Schoonbrod, HS Koblenz |
| Prof. Dr. Christian Fieberg, Westfälische HS | Prof. Dr. Ansgar Neuenhofer, TH Köln |
| Prof. Dr. Joachim Schenk, HtWK Leipzig |  |
| Marvin Scherzinger, TUHH  |  |
| Prof. Dr. Wolfram Heller HS München |  |

Welcome and Introduction

The Network meeting started with a welcome of Dean Dr. Arwa Abdelhay to all participants. She introduced the new Exchange Coordinator at the Department of Energy Engineering Dr. Laith Shalalfeh who is the successor of Dr. Matther Bdour.

Dr. Arwa gave an overview on the spring semester 2020 at GJU which was held online due to Covid-19 crisis. Based on the decision of the Jordanian Ministry of Higher Education all lectures, laboratories and exams were offered virtually. Labs included online simulations so experiments with equipment were video-taped and shared with the students via Microsoft Teams. From her experience blended learning during the remote semester went quite successful. The next semester in summer will include online lectures again however labs and exams will take place on campus.

For the current batch of German Year (GY) students there were two options offered due to Covid-19 crisis, either they could stay in Germany and continue their semester online or come back to/remain in Jordan and take crash courses at GJU. For the next batch of Outgoing students in WS 2020/21 several options are given, either start their German Year as usual, or to switch study and internship semester or withdraw from the German Year and stay in Jordan joining the regular courses at GJU. The decision is up to the student and nobody will be forced. However the German Year is a unique experience for each student. GJU is motivating students to join German lectures at the partner university and also include more Flying Faculty professors to give lectures taught in German at GJU.

Part 1: Energy Engineering

Dr. Laith Shalalfeh gave a PPT (attached) about his Department of Energy Engineering. The average number of students he is sending to German partner universities is 90 obliged to take 18-21 ECTS. The problem for the students is to find 1st/2nd/3rd year courses at the host university rather than electives as the provided list of electives is long. Prof. Siegismund requested statistics about the number of students taking and passing courses taught in English and German during their GY. Dr. Laith will provide these numbers.

Professor Siegismund suggested to add another requirement to the German Year: Students must pass a lecture/full course taught in German language (either online or provided by Flying Faculty). Dr. Laith is referring to technical language courses. Dr. Arwa mentioned the problem of sustainability in that case. GJU has no academic staff fluent in German, only Flying Faculty but the scheduling is rather difficult. However online courses are a new option for that.

The Ministry of Higher Education allows 25% courses online by regulation and it will be discussed to increase the number. Hereby the idea to deliver one course taught in German can be discussed as well.

GJU Vice-president Prof. Roßkopf explained the new concept of GJUs German Language Center (GLC). Beginning from 2021 on there will be a B1 test after the 5th semester not the 6th semester anymore with a new B1 exam designed by the TestDaF Institute with a revised concept. The 6th semester is particularly good to integrate Flying Faculty professors from German partner universities to teach their courses in German language at GJU. Part of the new concept is also a fast-track German language in the next academic year in order to get the best students into B2. It will be a voluntary track and might become a regular track in the future. The new GLC-concept re-arranges the content from six semesters to semester 1 till 5 and with a new focus of better arrangement and commitment on B2 fast track GJU is expecting higher results.

Dr. Laith is reporting from Graduation projects done in Germany by students with two supervisors (4CH) one at his Department and one the German host university. Currently five students are doing their Graduation projects in Germany.

He was also mentioning the Erasmus Plus projects ESMES and was encouraging the network members to participate in Erasmus calls and jointly apply for funding for further research projects with GJU SNREM.

GJU also plans a further approach in Digitalization with a new concept ready at the end of 2020 offering the possibility of more virtual mobility and interactive lectures between Jordan and Germany.

GJU plans to implement Dual Studies tracks at every faculty/school based on the Bavarian model. GIZ is offering funding for more than two years and Jordanian companies that are participating pay 250,- JOD per month to the students of the Dual Studies track. As students do the Dual Studies track voluntarily GJU professors need to be in close contact with the company and make use of their industry relations.

The network members decided to establish a (Moodle) platform to keep in touch during the semester and share further ideas on research, graduation projects, calls for third-party funding etc.

Prof. Dr. Jan Mugele was then elected unanimously by majority vote as new Network Head of Energy Engineering. He suggested to host the next SNREM network meeting at his university HWR Berlin.

Part 2: Water/Civil Engineering (Fatimeh Hadidi)

Dean Dr. Arwa Abdelhay welcomed the participants of the Water & Civil Engineering Network and gave another short introduction about the special circumstances during the last semester due to Covid-19. Also the German partners updated each other on the teaching situation at their own universities with regard to Covid-19.

Dr. Arwa presented the new developments at GJUs Department of Civil Engineering referring in particular to the new Master programs Traffic Safety and Humanitarian Water, Sanitation and Hygiene WASH.

Eng. Fatimeh Hadidi gave a presentation (PPT attached) on expanding the partner network for Civil Engineering. TH Köln should become a new partner as well as Beuth Hochschule Berlin, HTW Leipzig, HS Trier, Jade HS, HS Darmstadt, FH Münster and HS Wismar. Hochschule Magdeburg was added as well.

Good experience with clustering German and Jordanian students in mixed groups was reported by German professors. They split GJU students immediately in different groups and engage them in teamwork projects. If possible similar project work should be implemented at GJU as well.

Dr. Munjed was explaining the low numbers of Civil Engineering students. Currently many Engineers are sent back to Jordan from the Gulf region due to unemployment as big infrastructure projects in UAE/Gulf have been cancelled. The economy in the Gulf is suffering from the war in Yemen. GJU educates not only for Jordan but mainly for the Gulf region. Nevertheless there is no plan to close the Civil Engineering Department or the respective studies due to the current situation. It was designed for 50 students and having 30 students at the moment is still ok.

Apart from that the Covid-19 crisis hit the Jordanian Middle Class – GJUs target group for student recruitment - economically. The strategy of rethinking the expansion of Civil Engineering is rather “wait and see” and keeping the partnership stable. However SNREM needs a big network of German university partners because students of Water and Civil Engineering have different courses to take during their German Year. It is mainly academic reasons to keep the Civil Engineering Network big.

Another reason for expansion is the target of more joint research, having a sufficient pool of Flying Faculty professors, having opportunities for graduation projects, attracting potential Incoming students from German and European partner universities and including the German Dimension for Graduate studies.

Prof. Schoonbrood raised the question about collaboration with industry especially with Deutsche Bahn as a former project of establishing a Master of Railway Engineering was previously discussed. Prof. Roßkopf gave insights in the correspondence and meetings with Deutsche Bahn (DB). Even though GJU took several approaches DB decided to sign a MoU with AlBalqa university and Abu Dhabi. The Jordanian Ministry of Labor has a Privat-Public-Partnership (Syria- Aqaba) and DB has set up their own Education program on Railway Engineering. Evidently there was a change of strategy at Deutsche Bahn therefore GJU decided to stop the efforts with no further perspective of cooperation to be seen.

Dr. Arwa added that with every new study program in Jordan the market needs must be considered and proved. A market survey is obligatory. The curricula needs to be updated every five years as one batch of students needs to graduate before updates can be made.

Collaboration in two new MA programs (PPT attached):

The Master program Humanitarian Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) is funded by USAID and UNICEF (8.1 Mio.) and has the objective to nationalize the manager positions of Master. The study plan of the Master program and the approval of the Jordanian Ministry of Higher Education are ready. Currently the program is being accredited by the Higher Education Accreditation Admission. The first batch of students is supposed to start in October 2020.

The Master program MENASAFE Traffic Safety Engineering is funded by Erasmus Plus and opened already in May 2019. With the approval of the Ministry of Higher Education by regulation a program needs to open within two years. Currently the program is fulfilling the requirements in order to start, Human resources are needed, at least three professors (1 Full professor, 1 Associate professor, 1 Assistant professor). The first batch of students is supposed to start in spring 2021.

No new Master programs are planned at GJU as by regulations of the Ministry of Higher Education each university can only start one Master program per year.

The Network members decided on their next step: Establish a Moodle Platform to share information about calls and mobility programs, graduation projects, joint research and publications.

Next Network meeting will be either on 17.-18. June or 24.-25. June 2021 at HWR Berlin.