Dear International Alumni,

Again Bielefeld University saw an exciting year come and go. Among some new (and old) building lots we had personnel changes, research and some parties. Read more about it in this newsletter.

Bielefeld University – one big building lot…

Bielefeld University is changing. The 40-year-old buildings are getting renovated and modernized to create a good atmosphere for working and studying. First of all the building part, which is right behind the main entrance and has once included the university canteen, is worked on. Since February 2015, a white wall in the university hall protects students from noise and dirt from the building lot. Students have found new ways to use the wall, though.

On two evenings, the building wall was converted into a cinema screen. Students could vote for the films of their choice via Facebook. Among others, two films were shown in English: “Seven Psychopaths” and “Carnage”.

Moreover, the building wall acts as an enormous canvas for some creative minds. From 5th to 12th July 2015, national and international graffiti artists have beautified the dividing wall. University management has organized this event together with the team of graffiti festival 800hoch2 and the AStA.

Robots Are Supposed to Help Children to Learn German

Scientists of Bielefeld University want to use the robot “Nao” to help children train the German language. The project “L2TOR” is hoped to enable better integration of children with migration background and to reduce problems, e.g. during education in school. According to the Federal Office of Statistics, one third of the children under five years old are members of immigrant families. The project of the group of scientists is subsidised by the European Union. International informatics, pedagogs and linguists from five different universities and two companies cooperate for the project.
Bye Bye Westend-Party — Hello, Campusfestival!
On the 25th June 2015, there was a lot to celebrate for students of Bielefeld University. First of all, courses ended midday to give time for the preparations. Second, Campusfestival was celebrated for the first time and with summerlike temperatures. On four stages outdoors and two indoors, which were build between university main building and building X, people could hear some good music. Among others Thees Uhlmann, Annen-MayKantereit and Alligatoah were live on stage. Due to 19.500 visitors, Campusfestival was sold out. No wonder, since an early-bird-ticket was available for merely 16€. Campusfestival will enter its second phase in 2016.

French and Spanish are re-launched
Since winter term 2015/16, students of Bielefeld University can study French and Spanish for a bachelor of teaching profession and a master of education again. About 60 students started these fields of studies already.

Birthday of HERTZ 87.9
For 15 years now, there has been a frequency, which is loved by students and by teachers equally. HERTZ 87.9 celebrated its 15th birthday in December 2015 with a 15-hours-long live broadcast. Even the Media Authority North Rhine-Westphalia has confirmed that our campus radio is great. On the occasion of Campus Radio Day in Düsseldorf, HERTZ 87.9 was awarded three times. You can listen to it abroad at www.hertz879.de.

For more beautiful pictures, visit Bielefeld University on Instagram.
New rectorship

Since October 2015, Bielefeld University looks different due to the new rectorship, which was elected in June. They started their work for the next four years. Among them there are Professors Angelika Epple and Claudia Riemer as well as Professors Reinhold Decker and Martin Egelhaaf. Our new rector is Professor Dr. Eng. Gerhard Sagerer.

University Ranking: Bielefeld Supports Women in Science

Concerning the university ranking of quality management for gender equality, equality between men and women is not a foreign concept at Bielefeld University. In the seventh ranking of the Hochschulen des Kompetenzzentrums Frauen in Wissenschaft und Forschung (CEWS), Bielefeld University reached the fifth position in the ranking, which is two spots higher than before. All in all 8 out of 12 points were achieved, while none of the analyzed universities got more than 10 points. The ranking is based on data of 2013, which included among others the fields of students, PhDs, habilitations and junior professorships, scientific and creative personal and professorships.

Bielefeld is growing rapidly

As measured by population, Bielefeld is the fastest-growing city in North Rhine-Westphalia. A few months ago there was the expectation that Bielefeld will reach 334,000 inhabitants by 2020. This prediction came true five years early. The big growth cannot be explained by the flow of refugees, which reaches Europe and increases its population. Due to its economic strength, good working opportunities and various leisure activities, Bielefeld is an attractive city. The coming years will raise the problem of building new flats though, for which there is no space in Bielefeld.

A Flood of Beginners

Bielefeld University was getting crowded in winter term 2015/16. Just under 3,400 freshmen explored the university, a number which is similar to the year when two classes ended school together due to school years shortening in Germany. This led to the fact that by now about 23,400 students are enrolled at Bielefeld University, which has never been reached before. Our new rector Professor Dr. Eng. Gerhard Sagerer stated, that the high number of beginners gives proof to the quality and range of studies of Bielefeld University.
Interview with an Alumna

Being part of the International Office, it is always a pleasure to see what international students can gain from their experience at Bielefeld University, for example Daria Smagina. She studied sociology for one semester in 2015. “Now, thinking back of that semester abroad, I consider that to be a door to new adventurous life – The stunning eco surroundings, fast transport connections within the city and the helpful team of international office students, who spent most of their free time assisting us incoming students.” Daria enjoyed her time at Bielefeld University and made first-hand experiences with our advantages for students and researchers. “Bielefeld has its right to be called a modern university with most of facilities a student eager to research could expect. Being a cultural anthropologist, I was easily attached to the University library, full of up-to-date academic periodicals I had been waiting for years to read at my home Uni.” Spending a semester abroad was a great chance for her to develop her personality. “Most memorable to me was a possibility to discover different people and personalities, develop communication skills and to become cosmopolite.” Daria studies again at her home university in St. Petersburg. She misses Bielefeld though and would like to prolong her academical experiences here, because “they say ‘once Erasmus - forever Erasmus’ and I definitely agree. It was unforgettable experience that has proven that friendship has no borders.”

A stunning 2015 ended at Bielefeld University. Summer term 2016 is already waiting. We hope for a thrilling summer with many new international students and of course you, our international Alumni. If you want to stay in touch, please visit our Facebook group. Next to that, we also care for our group at Alumniportal Deutschland. Of course, we always look forward to exciting stories and news on career development of international Alumni, which we can publish in our next newsletter. If you have any suggestions, ideas and proposals, we are glad to hear them!

Best regards from Bielefeld,
Your Alumni International Team