

Alumni- Newsletter

Nr. 16, März 2018

Dear Alumni, dear readers,

There is something special about this Alumni Newsletter - it being the last issue that we are creating together before our new Head of Programme is taking over. So it's one of all these numerous activities and encounters one experiences for the last time, or for the last time together, come retirement. Looking back at staff changes during the last two or three years, we can now appreciate that professors and other colleagues leaving the Department do not necessarily disappear – most of them stay in touch, still support certain projects, come to teach from time to time, or just come back for public lectures and festivities. After all, the same applies to our Alumni who quite often come back to lecture, give a presentation, attend public lectures or just say hello. So – no reason to worry, the ICEUS community will be held together!

Apropos ICEUS Community: We have created an ICEUS Students and Alumni Group on Facebook. In case you are not yet part of it, but would like to be, please find us on Facebook or contact Ilka to add you to the group.

In this issue of the Newsletter, three Alumni will share their experiences and tell us about their life after graduation. Coming from different countries, studying in different groups, going to different destinations and doing different jobs, it is inspiring to read what Ioana Onete, Alberto Cerezo Soto and Victoria Kuhlmann can report to us from Vienna, Barcelona and Frankfurt.

We will also introduce our new professors taking over the positions for Intercultural Communication and for Theory and Practice of Social Communication: Prof. Dr. Kirsten Nazarkiewicz and Prof. Dr. Christine Domke.

We hope you will enjoy reading the Alumni reports and news from the Department.

Please stay in touch!

Prof. Dr. Volker Hinnenkamp
Head of Programme

Ilka Gersemann
Programme Coordinator



In this issue of the Alumni Newsletter:

- **Alumni Report: My professional life in Vienna**
Ioana Onete
- **Alumni Report: Looking back to an eventful career path from Germany to Mexico and Catalonia**
Alberto Cerezo Soto
- **Alumni Report: My Career in Human Resources – from Junior Starter to HR Manager**
Victoria Kuhlmann
- **Neue Professorinnen, neue Studiengangsleitung**
- **Prof. Dr. Hans-Wolfgang Platzer gibt Abschiedsvorlesung**
- **Ab Oktober neu am Fachbereich SK: Human Rights Studies in Politics, Law and Society, M.A.**
- **16 years of ICEUS**
Volker Hinnenkamp

My professional path in Vienna

Ioana Onete, ICEUS Alumna (10. Jg.)

After I had finished my B.A. in Translation and Interpreting in Bucharest, I entered ICEUS in October 2008. Thanks to the compulsory internship during ICEUS, Vienna became my second home. I was fortunate to be accepted as an intern by the NGO *The Educational Initiative for Central and Eastern Europe (EICEE)* which in 2009 was still located in a 17th century baroque castle next to the Viennese Woods. Towards the end of the internship I was offered a full time job at the same place, so during my last ICEUS semester I went back to Castle Neuwaldegg where I worked and wrote my MA thesis. I am extremely grateful for the valuable professional experience that I gained with EICEE mainly in event management, business administration and project development.



Hochschule Fulda
University of Applied Sciences

Alumni- Newsletter

Nr. 16, März 2018



After the castle got sold to a private person in autumn 2012 and the institution had to close down its Viennese office, I got employed by Constantia Flexibles International GmbH (a leading flexible packaging company) to assist the Executive Vice President of the Pharma department. This was another life-enhancing experience, in which I acquired know-how in the international expansion of a manufacturing company and had the chance to apply my language skills in English, German, Spanish and Italian. After my boss retired, I switched to assisting the CFO of the same company, but not for long as shortly after, I got an employment offer that was hard to refuse – to become a United Nations staff member.

I was recruited by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna to assist Technical Cooperation projects that make use of nuclear technology in fields such as food security and agriculture, human health and energy. As I was assigned to the department for Latin America and the Caribbean, I now cherish beautiful memories of sharing the office with amazing people from Costa Rica, Venezuela and Spain.

About six months ago I left the UN system for another international organization located in Vienna, in search of professional stability (as the UN unfortunately offers mainly short-term contracts). I am currently assisting international projects in the Private Sector and Trade Finance Department of the OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID). OFID contributes to economic growth and alleviates poverty in all disadvantaged regions of the world.

All in all I can wholeheartedly say that the ICEUS degree opened my professional path towards an international setting. Every time I applied for a new challenging job, all my references and certificates got thoroughly checked and the ICEUS experience was definitely a plus. My only regret so far is that Vienna was so easy to adapt to from the very start, that I quickly settled down in one of the cities with the highest quality of life

worldwide. This, on the other hand, prevented me from having experienced life in another foreign country, apart from Germany and Austria, but you never know where the future takes you ...



Ioana in the foyer of her workplace OFID

Looking back to an eventful career path from Germany to Mexico and Catalunya

Alberto Cerezo Soto, ICEUS Alumnus
(7. Jg.)

I am currently 37 years old and I come from Spain. I was an ICEUS student 12 years ago and I am convinced that it had been one of the doors that led me to the experiences I expected to have and the mindset I own now. After Fulda I got an internship at the UNESCO Mexico Office. I integrated in a research team headed by Rodolfo Stavenhagen, former UN Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples, where we worked on a publication on the practical terms to exercise cultural rights, or said in other way, shaping this abstract term. After 6 months as an intern, I got a job offer and I stayed at UNESCO Mexico for five years. I had the great opportunity to experience how a UN agency works, being permanently in contact with the other UN sister agencies, the government, academia and social organizations. I was involved in several projects like the development of management plans for World Heritage Sites, capacity building for leaders of community museums, or awareness raising events for the Slave Route



Hochschule Fulda
University of Applied Sciences

Alumni- Newsletter

Nr. 16, März 2018

project. That all with the duty of supporting the federal government on their efforts to comply with their obligations from the Conventions signed by the country with UNESCO.

The most challenging project to me was when I moved to the UN office in Chiapas to work on a peace-building program with displaced indigenous communities from the Zapatista armed conflict in 1994. Six years have passed since my experience in Mexico, and I am still reflecting and learning from what I had experienced in that time. It came the moment when I put my personal life before the professional one and decided to come back to Spain.



Alberto Cerezo Soto

After a while for myself and the difficult task of getting adapted again to my home country, I engaged as a consultant for European youth programs, enjoying and putting my heart on it, since I wanted to give back society what life had brought to me. Therefore, I made the best I could to work on the intercultural mindset of young people in Murcia, my home city, through projects funded by the European Commission. Then I fell in love with someone, closed my life in Murcia and moved to Barcelona, where I live now. It was not easy to get a nice job for me since I did not speak Catalan, which is required here to work in anything related to public services, which commonly is the case for areas such as education, culture, youth or international cooperation.



After having walked through the desert, professionally speaking, I had learnt the language and got a job as International Mobility Officer, managing global post-graduate programs at EAE Business School, a higher education institution where more than 60% of the students come from abroad. EAE belongs to Grupo Planeta, most known for being the biggest publishing group in Spanish speaking countries. I enjoy again to be surrounded by young people who carry their hopes and illusions for the future, and doing my best to support them in their endeavours. I have a partner no more, but am happy with my life in Barcelona. Never give up your dreams and learn from the situations that life put you ahead, wherever they are! ICEUS, alongside my Erasmus studies in wonderful Poland and other sometimes more and sometimes less fortunate experiences, was for me one of the settings where it all started. Last, I would like to take the opportunity to stress how grateful I am for the support Prof. Erich Ott* and Prof. Anne Honer* gave me. I will always remember them with deep affection. Best luck, Alberto

* Prof. Ott was Professor for Sociology at our Department until his retirement in 2006. Prof. Honer was Professor for Qualitative Research Methods at our Department until she died in 2012.

Alumni Report: My Career in Human Resources – from Junior Starter to HR Manager

Victoria Kuhlmann, ICEUS-Alumna (9. Jg.)

Gaining experience without sharing doesn't count a lot, and I would like to share my personal experience with everyone who is yet to decide and make their own way into an international career. After my bachelor studies at the University of Applied Sciences Cologne, I decided to apply to the masters in Intercultural Communication and European Studies at Hochschule Fulda. Throughout my studies, I became more sensitized to the various cultures from all over the world and came to understand that many aspects of our lives are not black and white, but rather



Hochschule Fulda
University of Applied Sciences

Alumni- Newsletter

Nr. 16, März 2018

very colorful. I learned that if one wants to become successful, it requires a lot of compromise, diplomacy and patience.

Already during my studies, I was extremely interested in the field of Human Resources and made the decision to specialize in this area. I wrote my master's thesis on human resource strategies for dealing with a diverse workforce. I definitely tried to put a strong focus on this area, in order to develop my expertise. I conducted a survey on Diversity Management in one of the big international companies. I contacted corporate offices and CEOs of larger international companies in Germany and inquired if they had time for an interview. After multiple attempts, I had success! I interviewed a CEO, as well as company leaders and senior management regarding diverse workforces. Step by step, it became clear to me that I definitely wanted to take up a career in a large international company dealing with people – Human Resource (I still find it a bit ridiculous that people use to call it “resource” although we are dealing with people!). I must admit, it was not really easy, hence I started my career with an internship position at a German association.

I worked for my first employer for slightly more than half a year and „groomed” my CV. Shortly after that, I received a call from one of the largest multinational companies in the IT branch and was offered a position in HR – which I immediately accepted. From day one, it was a great opportunity to work in an international environment and master challenges in an HR team. I was promoted from a starter generalist position to an HR advisor. My ICEUS experience and knowledge helped me a lot to deal with large multinational teams and maintain a professional relationship with HR colleagues from different geographies. After working for this company, I moved on to my next HR position as an HR Specialist at a global IT company. I worked on various multinational projects, managed an HR team in Germany and Eastern Europe, and frequently travelled around Europe on various HR initiatives.



Later, I pursued additional educational course work in HR at the Chamber of Commerce in Frankfurt (IHK Frankfurt) and completed a bachelor's degree in Human Resource Management and Recruitment. Obtaining this additional education added more value to my profile.



Victoria Kuhlmann an ihrem Arbeitsplatz in Frankfurt

Looking back at my professional career of the last 9 years, it was a development from a junior starter position to HR manager in a large global company. I can definitely say that it is not only knowledge or the degree that is important, but what really counts is one's ability to work with diversity, having empathy, and establish a trustful business relationship with various stakeholders. An academic degree is only a key to open the door into the wide professional world of career possibilities, but as soon as the door is open it is our own responsibility to go the way. Studying ICEUS has helped me a lot to be capable to work in cross-cultural teams and projects, navigate in a professional international environment and reach a mutual point of understanding despite having different views and mentalities.

It is also worth mentioning that I do really appreciate all the friendships that I made during my studies and all fellow students of ICEUS! I would be happy to meet all the friends, mentors and lecturers with pleasure again.



Hochschule Fulda
University of Applied Sciences

Alumni- Newsletter

Nr. 16, März 2018

Neue Professorinnen, neue Studiengangsleitung

Gleich mehrere Professuren mussten und müssen am Fachbereich SK in diesen Jahren neu besetzt werden – sei es, weil Professor*innen, die viele Jahre am Fachbereich gewirkt haben, in den Ruhestand gegangen sind oder bald gehen werden, sei es, weil sie einen Ruf an eine andere Hochschule bzw. Universität erhalten haben. Im Wintersemester 2016/2017 und Sommersemester 2017 waren es Prof. Dr. Werner Pfab und Prof. Dr. Hans-Wolfgang Platzer, die in den Ruhestand gingen, im kommenden Sommersemester wird Prof. Dr. Volker Hinnenkamp seine letzten Seminare für BASIB- und ICEUS-Studierende durchführen.

Die Professuren für Theorie und Praxis sozialer Kommunikation und für Interkulturelle Kommunikation sind bereits wieder besetzt: mit Prof. Dr. Christine Domke für Theorie und Praxis sozialer Kommunikation und Prof. Dr. Kirsten Nazarkiewicz für Interkulturelle Kommunikation und ab April auch als Studiengangsleiterin für ICEUS. Beide wollen wir hier vorstellen. Der ICEUS-Studentin Elaine Potts beantworten die beiden neuen Professorinnen darüber hinaus Fragen über das, was sie ICEUS-Studierenden an der Hochschule mitgeben wollen.

Professur für Interkulturelle Kommunikation: Dr. Kirsten Nazarkiewicz

Kirsten Nazarkiewicz worked as a flight attendant and Purser (Manager of international cabin staff) with Lufthansa from 1981 until 1995 on worldwide routes. She studied Sociology, Economics and Psychology in Frankfurt and Gießen (Diploma in Social Sciences) as well as Adult Education in Kaiserslautern (M.A.) and wrote her empirical PhD on the topic of intercultural and anti-racist learning by conduct of talk.

Before she was appointed to the succession of Prof. Volker Hinnenkamp, leading ICEUS,



she has been working as a culture reflexive organization and team developer, coach and trainer together with a multicultural team in her own company she founded in 1996. Still, she is one of two partners of Consilia cct – create culture together. As a non-medical practitioner and systemic therapist she is specialized on trauma therapy having a permission for a practice in Frankfurt.



Prof. Dr. Kirsten Nazarkiewicz

She published more than 50 articles and various books on intercultural learning, culture reflexivity, intercultural competence, dealing with stereotypes, working abroad, intercultural coaching, quality in systemic constellation work, individual and collective trauma. With her preferred empirical methods (conversation analysis and studies of work) she did research on communication in trainings and seminars, gender differences in high risk environments (communication in commercial airline cockpit) and currently on systemic constellation work.

Questions by ICEUS Student Elaine Potts

Elaine: Having many years of experience in both the private and public sector, what advice do you have for students who are currently studying ICEUS and/or beginning their career in the field of intercultural communication?

Nazarkiewicz: 1. Self-confidence. Know who you are, what your skills are and believe in



Hochschule Fulda
University of Applied Sciences

Alumni- Newsletter

Nr. 16, März 2018



yourself. Go for it. The world is waiting for multilingual and culture sensitive experts.

2. *Be pragmatic: get started somewhere. If it is not the dream job, develop yourself to get there.*

3. *Dare dreaming: the job you always wanted is not available on the market? Create it! There are no open positions in the field or organization you find interesting? Be initiative, network, ask people, fight for it and keep learning!*

Elaine: ICEUS is also very practice orientated and aims to link theory with practice – how will you link your many years of professional experience with theory in the classroom?

Nazarkiewicz: *When consulting, coaching or training in the past decades I always aimed at grounding the delivered services and contents in scientific theories, developments or methods. My motive for that was solely personal. I feel more comfortable, inspired and creative by using profound input. Having done that I gained a lot of practical experiences what works and what does not.*

Now it is vice versa. When I absorb or teach theories, methodologies or studies I always check what is needed and what is – according to my insights – less helpful for the those struggling in their everyday work life. I am discussing the practical benefit with the students e.g. doing ethnography or learning about intercultural coaching or negotiation. Using real case studies or open questions from practical fields which need a scientific answer I try to empower the students to develop their own transfer skills.

Elaine: What compelled/aspired/motivated you to pursue a career in the field of intercultural communication?

Nazarkiewicz: *Actually, there are three roots, theoretical, personal and practical. Theoretically, culture (as well as gender) is my lens as a sociologist to analyse social changes. Personally, I feel comfortable when I am confronted with something I do*

not understand or that feels “strange”; I love to be amazed and learn myself. Practically, I’ve always lived a multicultural life. Starting to work for an airline at the age of 20, I travelled the globe as a flight attendant and worked as a manager of the international cabin staff. When I stopped flying and stayed in Germany most of the time I decided to bring the world into my office and working life again. So I built up a team with intercultural experts. I was always confident that this is a future oriented field.

Professur für Theorie und Praxis Sozialer Kommunikation: Dr. Christine Domke

Christine Domke was trained as an editorial journalist and worked as an editor in charge for a regional newspaper. Subsequently she studied Linguistics and Sociology at Bielefeld University, where she received her doctor's degree with a thesis on “Meetings as a part of decision communication”.

While she worked as a postdoctoral research fellow in Dortmund, Bremen and Chemnitz, she was i.a. on the board of the Germanic Society and acted as spokesperson for the German Linguistic Society.

In 2012 she was habilitated by TU Chemnitz for her study on urban textscapes and public communication, which included research of visually, audibly or tactually perceivable communication at railway stations and airports as well as in cities.

She has given numerous lectures both nationally and internationally and has published more than 60 articles and several books on conversation and texts in public places, corporate context, the mass media and digital communication forms with a focus on such diverse subjects as business conferences, prohibition signage, commercial and political advertising and love. Her current research includes semiotic landscapes, digital communications and interactional space.



Hochschule Fulda
University of Applied Sciences

Alumni- Newsletter

Nr. 16, März 2018



Prof. Dr. Christine Domke

Questions by ICEUS Student Elaine Potts

Elaine: What advice and/or skills do you want students to take with them when they leave your classroom?

Domke: To me curiosity is the basis of every scientific endeavour. If students walk out of my classroom with an educated, but non-biased curiosity in human communication, I'd say I've done something right. My advice: Never stop challenging your own beliefs! Question common assumptions about conversations, texts and speakers, and reflect your own communicative behaviour. And above all: Understand that without communication there would be no organisations, no universities, no associations, no social life at all. This is what fascinates me about working at Fulda University of Applied Sciences: The vibrant research and teaching environment of the Department of Social and Cultural Sciences allows me to introduce the topic of social communication from different perspectives – from a standpoint of Communication Science, Linguistics, Cultural Studies and Sociology. Thus my field of research is a real all-rounder – with a lot of exciting potential for different focal points.

Elaine: What lead you to work in the field of Social Communication? What were your early influences? Teachers? Mentors? Life Experience?

Domke: To make a long story short: My interest in human communications in times of social change and media shift.

The longer version: Communication has always been my key interest, even before I started my scientific career. After my „Abitur“ I started working as an editorial journalist which of course meant a lot of oral and written communication and the use of different media. Later at university I learned to understand language and communication in a more abstract way and as a part of structures and processes, a subject that really captivated me. In particular it was the vivid analytical context of Bielefeld University – the lecturers and their seminars on conversation analysis and philosophy of science in linguistics and on system theory and media sciences in sociology – who shaped the academic I am today. The interaction and discursive aspect of science has always been a center of my interest, in seminars and colloquia as well as during my doctorate.

Other than that: Years of commuting by train and a (family) life in different cities certainly added to my ability to look at social communication from different perspectives ...

* * *

We wish both professors best of luck for your professorship in Fulda and rewarding encounters with students of ICEUS, BASIB, Sozialrecht and future programmes!



Hochschule Fulda
University of Applied Sciences

Alumni- Newsletter

Nr. 16, März 2018



Prof. Dr. Hans-Wolfgang Platzer gibt Abschiedsvorlesung

Prof. Dr. Hans-Wolfgang Platzer hat am 5. Dezember letzten Jahres seine Abschiedsvorlesung gegeben.



Prof. Dr. Hans-Wolfgang Platzer

Sein Vortrag „Die soziale Dimension der Europäischen Integration. Entwicklungen – Kontroversen – Perspektiven“ war so gut besucht, dass unser Hörsaal gar nicht ausreichte für die vielen Gäste. Darüber hinaus wurde der Vortrag auf Wunsch von Alumni, die nicht mehr in der Region leben, aufgezeichnet und ist im Medienarchiv der Hochschule abrufbar: <https://oma.hs-fulda.de/>.

Für das Promotionszentrum in Sozialwissenschaften mit den Schwerpunkten Globalisierung, Europäische Integration und Interkulturalität steht Prof. Platzer übrigens weiterhin zur Verfügung!

Ab Oktober neu am Fachbereich SK: Human Rights Studies in Politics, Law and Society, M.A.

Im Oktober diesen Jahres startet am Fachbereich SK ein neuer, internationaler Masterstudiengang: Human Rights Studies in Politics, Law and Society. Hier sollen sowohl deutsche als auch internationale Graduierte als Expert*innen für Menschenrechtsfragen ausgebildet werden. Die Studierenden werden sich mit der historischen sowie gegenwärtigen

Institutionalisierung und Implementierung der Menschenrechte im Bereich des Rechts, der Politik und der Zivilgesellschaft befassen. Sie sollen die nationale, regionale und globale Entwicklung der Menschenrechte aus einem soziologischen, rechtlichen und politikwissenschaftlichen Blickwinkel betrachten und relevante Entwicklungsdynamiken kennen lernen. Nähere Infos gibt es hier:

<https://www.hs-fulda.de/index.php?id=7723>

Sixteen Years of ICEUS ...

Prof. Dr. Volker Hinnenkamp

When I will retire next October it will be exactly sixteen years of ICEUS – sixteen years of teaching, most of the time as Head of the Programme. Sixteen years also means sixteen different ICEUS groups, starting with group number 4 and leaving when group number 20 will start. I still remember Christian Schrader's phone call, Dean of the Department in those days, sometime in July 2002, asking me, if I would accept the appointment as professor for Intercultural Communication. I gladly agreed, but didn't really know what was awaiting me, not even knowing if ICEUS was to be pronounced IKEUS or ITSEUS ... but that was the lesser problem! My baptism of fire started with a block seminar for the Seniors of ICEUS 3 on Intercultural Negotiations and afterwards going to the small pizzeria "Tomate" together. Despite all the massive changes, both survived over the years, the Intercultural Negotiations seminar as well as the Italian restaurant – and of course ICEUS!

My first regular ICEUS group, ICEUS 4, was a huge group, I think about 40 students – a number that in the long run settled at around 30 students per group. I am still in personal contact with some of my firsties! The composition, of course, remained stable, with about two thirds from all over the world and one third from all over Germany. This hasn't changed either. So, over the sixteen years I



Hochschule Fulda
University of Applied Sciences

Alumni- Newsletter

Nr. 16, März 2018



have roughly taught 460 ICEUS students – remembering most of them, of you, but having difficulties remembering all the names!

There were lots of changes over time, having started in a rather small campus with hardly more than 3000 students in 2002, now amounting close to 8000 students! Accordingly, the campus has extended ever since and the Social and Cultural Studies Department had to move a couple of times. I still feel somehow sorry for the ICEUS groups that had to suffer from a more or less improvised situation when we had to move into the deserted buildings which before had hosted military-like Federal Border Guards, temporarily even teaching in class rooms not worth the notion.

With Fulda university's enlargement our department grew as well, first with introducing Social Law Studies, and shortly after, ICEUS' little bachelor offspring BASIB was launched. That was in 2004. Its implementation then was partly motivated by the need to create a consecutive study programme which protected ICEUS from losing its tuition waiver. So when we celebrated our little jubilee 15 years of ICEUS, BASIB celebrated its 10th anniversary. This jubilee in November 2014 was definitely one of the highlights in my ICEUS-times, and it still feels as if it took place just yesterday.

Looking back, the sixteen years went past fast, sometimes rapidly, even breathlessly, with all the administrative demands from outside, from accommodating the programme according to the Bologna criteria of modularization, followed by accreditation and re-accreditation processes. Besides hard work and the incredible teaching load – which found its counterpart in the high amount of lessons students had to attend – there were also the good sides of all of it, of which I wouldn't want to miss a day! First of all to mention the incredible diversity of my students, always challenging, always demanding and always helping me to stay in an open

state of mind, patiently, and sometimes even enthusiastically grappling with what intercultural studies had to offer. Some of these things, painstaking ones at times – as reflected in speeches at master recognition ceremonies – were the Rich Points, which left me a fine and comprehensive collection of small texts from most of my ICEUS-students.

Whatever was perceived critically, what we all shared was that the Department gave us a feeling of academic and sometimes social home, an atmosphere that helped us all to endure the administrative hardships and overloads. And ICEUS would not be thinkable without its organizational and social heart, which of course is Ilka Gersemann, who I have always regarded as ICEUS' actual boss. Without her as manager and organizer, but also think tank, ICEUS wouldn't be what it is!



A team that always liked a good laugh

When Ilka was on maternity leave it was ex-ICEUS students who did that job, Sabine Schäfer at first, and Solrun Graham-Parker for a whole year. It was as if ICEUS had become a real family business, some of our Alumni even work at Fulda university. We are still in contact with many if not most of our ex-students, knowing how many of them have entered successful careers or have gained doctoral degrees. An option,



Hochschule Fulda
University of Applied Sciences

Alumni- Newsletter

Nr. 16, März 2018

which is even possible at Fulda University today in our doctoral programme in Social Sciences focusing on Globalization, European Integration and Interculturality.

So every chance of a reunion was a highlight, which impressed me with my ex-students' sovereignty and expertise as in the Alumni Lectures, or in the wonderful get together of our Alumni Meetings at the end of May 2008, and in June 2012 – really great reunions! Likewise fantastic was the jubilee meeting at the end of November 2014 mentioned above. Of course, every ICEUS-group had their own highlights, sometimes small ones: There were parties, wild ones with karaoke competitions or heavy dancing and home-bred DJs; there were information evenings where regions and countries were introduced or the Central Asian New Year Nau-rys was celebrated; there were political panel discussions on current European problems such as the one about migrant youth revolts in suburban France; there were excursions to conferences (the Bad Liebenzell and Brussel-excursions were not mine, of course); and there was the solemnly celebrated handing over of Master's Certificates with music, speeches and parties afterwards at the end of the summer semester. Since 2011, with ICEUS 13, in the first weeks of the new semester we started the Schlitz excursions with the new Juniors – a highly appreciated institution ever since which helps to create a kind of ICEUSness from the very start. With all these events and activities my own involvement at times was high, but sometimes I just enjoyed, just being an accompanying figure.

On January 24, I had organized a farewell party for my last ICEUS-groups in Café Chaos ... I wished that all of my ex-students could have been there! It was a great and jolly event, unfortunately the last one of this kind for me!



What remains after such a long and intensive time? Of course, good memories, and plans to write books and papers in my hopefully abundant leisure time, exploiting all the intercultural wealth I have met, learnt, read about and experienced. And of course staying in contact, somehow! Also leaning back knowing that Ilka Gersemann and Professor Kirsten Nazarkiewicz, my successor, will make a brilliant team, better than ever before. So, ICEUS, goodbye for now!

Volker Hinnenkamp



Some of the Alumni and Seniors at Hinnenkamp's farewell party

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Hochschule Fulda
University of Applied Sciences