



FRIAS DOCUMENTS

ALBERT-LUDWIGS-UNIVERSITÄT FREIBURG • FREIBURG INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDIES



UNIVERSITY-BASED INSTITUTES FOR ADVANCED STUDY
IN A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE:
PROMISES, CHALLENGES, NEW FRONTIERS
OCTOBER 25–27, 2010

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

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WORDS OF WELCOME

We hereby present you with the results of a very special conference that took place in Freiburg in October 2010: At the invitation of the Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies (FRIAS), representatives from more than 30 institutes worldwide came to Freiburg to join the first meeting of University-Based Institutes for Advanced Study (UBIAS). The conference's aim was to provide a forum for international exchange and mutual learning between institutes of a special kind: research institutes which are embedded within a university and stand for the promotion of excellent academic research in interaction with their home universities.

The conference indicated the important role of these institutes, as they contribute to the innovation and internationalisation of academic research cultures, and initiated an open dialogue about the promises and challenges of fruitful interplay between the institutes and their universities.

Looking back at the conference, I am confident that many longstanding contacts and collaborations will arise from the lively discussions and the various encounters we witnessed. I would like to thank Professor Werner Frick and his organisational team for taking and implementing this important initiative.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "H. J. Schiewer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "H" and "J".

(Prof. Hans-Jochen Schiewer, Rector, University of Freiburg)



Dear Friends and Colleagues, we were truly overwhelmed by the response to our initial invitation to a conference of University-Based Institutes for Advanced Studies (UBIAS) to take place in Freiburg in April 2010. After having cancelled this date at the very last minute due to the worldwide disturbances caused by the eruption of Iceland's now famous volcano, I was therefore especially happy about the even greater response to our second invitation. However, the actual conference, which – eventually – took place in October 2010, turned out to be a success that by far surpassed our most daring hopes and expectations.

Keeping the inspiring encounters and experiences of the conference in mind, this documentation includes a written version of our opening remarks, entitled "Mapping the world of UBIAAS", and a summary of the main topics and questions that were discussed in the working sessions. We have also summarized some of the agreements made in the closing session. In addition, we considered it useful to provide you with the addresses of all participating institutes in order to facilitate further contact and exchange between them.

With best wishes on behalf of the FRIAS directorate and the organizing team,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Werner Frick', with a stylized flourish at the end.

(Prof. Werner Frick, Speaker, FRIAS Board of Directors)

UNIVERSITY-BASED INSTITUTES
FOR ADVANCED STUDY IN A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE:
**PROMISES, CHALLENGES,
NEW FRONTIERS**



Coloured world map by Martin Waldseemüller
(from the University of Freiburg, Template:Schiller, Waldseemüller)

UNI
FREIBURG

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
OCTOBER 25-27, 2010
HOSTED BY THE FREIBURG INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDIES (FRIAS)

www.frias.uni-freiburg.de

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

**MONDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2010
10.00 – 10.30
OFFICIAL OPENING**

Words of Welcome

Prof. Hans-Jochen Schiewer

(Rector, University of Freiburg)

Prof. Werner Frick

(Speaker, FRIAS Board of Directors)

10.30 – 11.00

WORKING SESSION 1

Prof. Werner Frick /

Dr. Carsten Dose (FRIAS)

Mapping the World of UBIAS:

**An introductory survey based on a question-
naire sent to all participating institutes**

11.00 – 11.45

OPENING KEYNOTE LECTURE

Prof. Philip G. Altbach

(Director, Center for International
Higher Education, Boston College)

**The Research University in the 21st Century:
Perspectives, Challenges, Visions**

13.30 – 15.15

WORKING SESSION 2

Chair: Rector Prof. Hans-Jochen Schiewer

Klaus Tappeser (Head of Department,
Ministry of Science, Research and the Arts
of Baden-Württemberg)

**Policies for fostering excellent research
and international cooperation**

15.45 – 18.00
WORKING SESSION 3

**Institutional Designs and Disciplinary
Constellations: Exemplary paradigms**

15.45 – 16.45
WORKING SESSION 3 – PART A

Chair: **Prof. Jan G. Korvink** (FRIAS)
Dr. Barbara Cimatti (IAS Bologna)
Prof. Eliezer Rabinovici (IAS, Jerusalem)
Prof. Hideaki Miyajima (Waseda IAS,
Tokyo)
Prof. Barry C. Smith (SAS, London)
Prof. Michael O'Neill (IAS Durham)
**UBIAS embracing the full range
of academic disciplines**

16.45 – 17.45
WORKING SESSION 3 – PART B

Chair: **Prof. Jörn Leonhard** (FRIAS)
Prof. Simon Goldhill (CRASSH,
Cambridge, UK)
Prof. Zhenglai Deng (Fudan IAS, Shanghai)
Prof. Aron Rodrigue (Stanford Humanities
Center)
Prof. Pedro Paulo A. Funari (CEAv,
Campinas)
**UBIAS placing a special emphasis
on the Humanities and Social Sciences**

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2010

9.30 – 11.00
WORKING SESSION 4

Chair: **Prof. Werner Frick** (FRIAS)
Prof. Judith E. Vichniac
(Radcliffe IAS, Cambridge, MA)
Prof. Christof Rapp (CAS, München)
Prof. Hendrik Geyer (Stellenbosch IAS)
Prof. Kirill Ole Thompson (IHS, Taipei)
**Between Autonomy and Dependency:
UBIAS within their university framework**

11.30 – 13.00
WORKING SESSION 5

Chair: **Prof. Hermann Grabert** (FRIAS)
Prof. Dapeng Cai (Nagoya IAR)
Prof. Mridula Mukherjee
(Nehru Memorial, New Delhi)
Prof. Christine Maillard
(MISHA, Strasbourg)
Dr. des. Dominik Hünninger
(Lichtenberg-Kolleg, Göttingen)
**Advancing Knowledge: Formats and
methods to create a productive research
environment**

14.00 – 15.00
WORKING SESSION 3 – PART C

Chair: **Prof. Jens Timmer** (FRIAS)
Prof. Patrick Dewilde (TUM-IAS, München)
Prof. Doochul Kim (Korea IAS, Seoul)
**UBIAS specifically focussing on the
Natural and Technical Sciences**



WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2010

9.00 – 10.30

WORKING SESSION 6

Chair: **Prof. Peter Auer** (FRIAS)

Prof. Ulrike Davy (ZiF, Bielefeld)

Prof. Teri-ann White (IAS, Perth)

Prof. Gerd Folkers

(Collegium Helveticum, Zürich)

Prof. Aditya Mukherjee

(Jawaharlal Nehru IAS, New Delhi)

Fostering Interdisciplinarity:

Successful strategies and techniques

11.00 – 12.00

WORKING SESSION 7

Chair: **Dr. Carsten Dose** (FRIAS)

Prof. Sami Pihlström (Helsinki Collegium)

Prof. César Ades (IEA, São Paulo)

Prof. Poul Holm

(Trinity Long Room Hub, Dublin)

Dr. Andrew Sors (Collegium Budapest)

Funding UBIAS: Financial considerations

12.00 – 13.00

WORKING SESSION 8

Chair: **Prof. Ulrich Herbert** (FRIAS)

Dr. Christina Chia

(John Hope Franklin Humanities Institute,
Durham, NC)

Dr. Olivier Bouin (RFIEA, Lyon)

Prof. Dianne Newell

(Peter Wall IAS, Vancouver)

Prof. Yunqian Chen (IAS Nanjing)

Modes of inter-(UB)IAS-cooperation

14.00 – 15.30

CLOSING SESSION

Chair: **Prof. Werner Frick** (FRIAS)

Concluding plenary debate:

UBIAS – where to go from here?

**Ideas, new frontiers, future networking
and cooperation**

THE CONFERENCE FRAMEWORK

Roughly 50 representatives from 32 Institutes for Advanced Study (IAS) worldwide followed the invitation to join the Freiburg conference from October 25–27, 2010.

The conference was opened by an introductory statement entitled "Mapping the world of UBIAS" (see p. 10–18), followed by a key-note lecture by Professor Philip G. Altbach, an internationally renowned expert in comparative educational and university research from Boston College. His lecture on the past, present and future of research universities discussed the university-based research college model in a larger context of higher education history and policy, even declaring it to be an indispensable component of a modern research university in the 21st century.

The conference sessions were clustered around a number of overarching themes that seemed of particular interest to all institutes:

- UBIAS and the scope of academic disciplines (humanities and/or natural sciences)
- UBIAS within their university framework
- Formats and methods to create a productive research environment
- Fostering Interdisciplinarity: Successful strategies and techniques
- Funding UBIAS: Financial considerations
- Modes of inter-(UB)IAS-cooperation

Besides the discussion of these topics, each panel provided enough space for detailed presentations of the institutes. These opening statements are not documented in the following summary. (The institutes' individual websites offer further information about the institutes; and all addresses are listed in the annex of this documentation.)

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

"MAPPING THE WORLD OF UBIAS"

1. INTRODUCTION

When first considering organizing a global meeting of University-Based Institutes for Advanced Study (UBIAS) in the summer of 2009, we started out with an internet search and were surprised to find so many institutes of this kind worldwide.

Previously, we had been in touch with several widely renowned IAS that are not university-based, like the famous IAS Princeton, looking at them as models for setting up an institute like ours. We did indeed travel to Princeton and visited other famous institutes like the National Humanities Center, the institutes in Palo Alto, Uppsala, Wassenaar and the Wissenschaftskolleg in Berlin, receiving a very warm welcome and the most generous hospitality and advice at all these wonderful places. We learnt a tremendous amount through these encounters, getting to understand the basics and essentials that make them work, with components ranging from the vital necessity of rigorous academic standards and selection procedures to the importance of community-building, cultural activities and more practical matters such as regular meals shared by all fellows of the institute. So we have every reason to be grateful to these outstanding institutions and to revere them as highly attractive models. They have set the standards, and the excellent public reputation enjoyed by the term "IAS" today is due to their pioneering work and efforts.

And yet, one fundamental difference could not be denied, for, after all, the premise of these visits was that we were building up an institute with one seminal objective that they did not share, namely to serve our university and to integrate the new institute into the existing academic framework of a 550 year-old university. Over the course of time we found that this feature of establishing an IAS *within* a traditional university and as part and parcel of this university made all the difference you could imagine, posed different challenges and opened up different potential. And it is with the ambition to learn more about the specifics of this new, 'hybrid' type of UBIAS that we have invited representatives from institutions similar to

our own in this one, central respect: we all belong to Institutes for Advanced Study within a larger university context, institutes for whose identity it is vital to constantly define and redefine the relationship with their home institutions.

Of course, once we decided that we would scrutinize this particular type of university-based institute more specifically, we immediately found that these institutions are fairly different from each other.

So, the first question really is whether UBIAS do constitute a type of institution in their own right at all, or whether we find ourselves confronted with a multifarious continuum of different institutional settings, where the boundaries between UBIAS and university departments, humanities centres, research clusters or other types of inter-departmental centre are fuzzy and blurred. Or, to put it more bluntly: Does it make sense to have invited precisely this selection of institutes represented at the Freiburg conference?

As you will see, your answers to our questionnaire *do* lead us to the positive conclusion that there is indeed a set of common features that could serve to draft a working definition of what constitutes an UBIAS. Yet having said that, we need to be aware, at the same time, of the specific differences and dissimilarities existing between our institutes – and the conference will give us ample opportunity to discuss them in great detail.

2. KEY FEATURES OF UBIAS

Based on the information provided by your answers to our questionnaire, we would like to outline a number of relevant characteristics of University-Based Institutes for Advanced Study, stressing common traits as well as distinctions. After sketching some general characteristics we will look at some particularly interesting aspects in more detail.

The questionnaire had been sent to all 32 participating institutes in advance. It served to gather basic statistical information about the institutes as well as insights into their ways of working and their strategic objectives. The questionnaire tried



to take into account the multifarious variety of existing institutional settings and left a broad flexibility to adequately portray the specific profile of each institution. The findings presented at the conference do not claim to provide reliable empirical data; instead they intend to point out some interesting points for further discussion.

Taking up the main idea of traditional Institutes for Advanced Study, such as Princeton or the Wissenschaftskolleg Berlin, UBIAS pursue the promotion of excellent and innovative research by providing space, time and necessary facilities to outstanding researchers and promising young academics. Exempt from (some or most) other duties, the beneficiaries of these institutes, most often called fellows, are enabled to (fully) concentrate on their research and pursue their projects – be it as individual researchers or in close collaboration with research groups or teams. The basic idea is that excellent research needs excellent working conditions, and this includes the creation of a lively and inspiring academic environment. By creating this space within the university, UBIAS support the maintenance and enhancement of scholarly excellence *within* their university as a whole and play an important role in the promotion of young scientists.

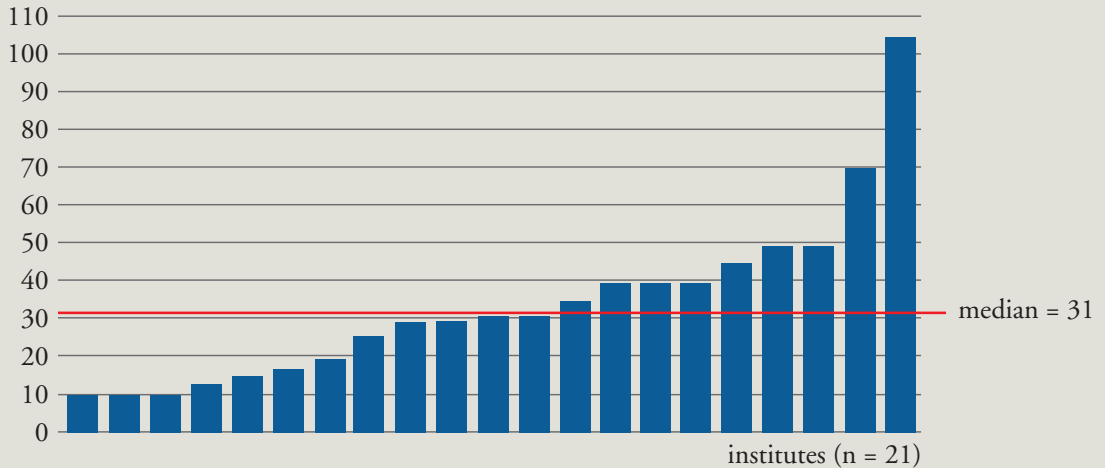


Diagram 1: No. of fellows per year at different institutes

Furthermore, UBIAS are typically characterised by the ambition to bring together the best researchers for a certain period of time, and these researchers are, more often than not, recruited both from the institute's own home-university *and* from the worldwide academic community. Thus, UBIAS provide a platform for international scientific exchange and bring top-level scholars to their university; they are a formidable tool for furthering a research university's internationalisation and strengthening its inter-institutional collaborations. Some institutes, however, prefer to concentrate on the academic potential of their home universities; a few others admit external scholars only. This could lead us to questions about the right balance between researchers from outside and from within the university.

Focusing on individual researchers and their profiles, fellowships are the most important, most frequently applied and most visible instrument in supporting and invigorating excellent research. The promotion of outstanding *individual investigators* is a core objective of many of our institutes. Nevertheless, research *groups or teams* play an important role in the setting of many institutes as well, especially in connection with interdisciplinary research activities.

There are vast differences in the number of fellows visiting our institutions every year. An average size for a UBIAS would be somewhere in the range of 30 to 50 fellows per year, but there are lots of institutes with smaller figures as well. (Diagram 1)

There is a wide scope of possible arrangements and types of fellowship: internal/external fellows, resident fellows, visiting fellows, summer fellows, senior fellows, junior fellows, early career fellows, postdoctoral fellows, even teaching fellows.

The duration of fellowships typically varies between a couple of weeks or months and several years; permanent fellowships are the rare exception, though they do exist. (Diagram 2)

Most institutes recruit their fellows through open advertisement and an (international) application process often monitored by their advisory boards or other high-ranking selection committees; some also invite outstanding researchers *ad personam* to assume a fellowship at their institute. It would be interesting to learn from your experiences in this field: Which procedures and arrangements did you find to be successful for identifying the best possible candidates for a fellowship and for promoting outstanding research? Are there differ-

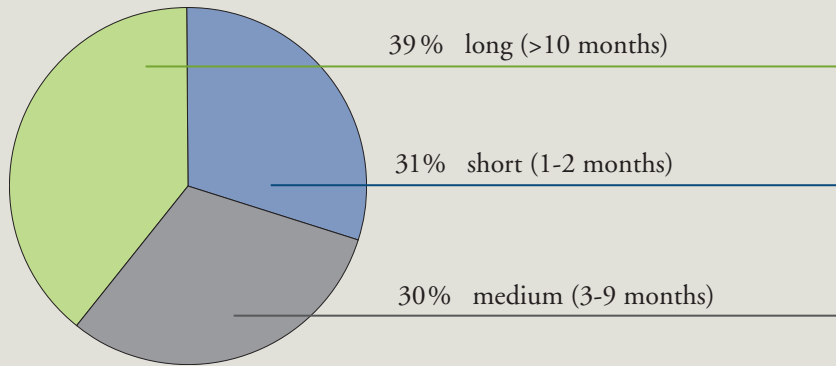


Diagram 2: Duration of stay / Length of fellowship (answers from 22 institutes)

ences between the academic disciplines; different needs; other priorities and considerations?

With respect to the involvement and commitment of their fellows, most institutes expect regular participation in their academic activities, such as seminars, colloquia, workshops etc. As a rule, fellows are asked to present their work to other fellows and/or members of the university during their fellowship and to actively participate in other fellows' presentations and the ensuing discussions. Some institutes consider regular social activities like joint lunches, dinners etc. (several times a week or even daily) an important part of their programme; and quite a number of them have an explicit residence obligation.

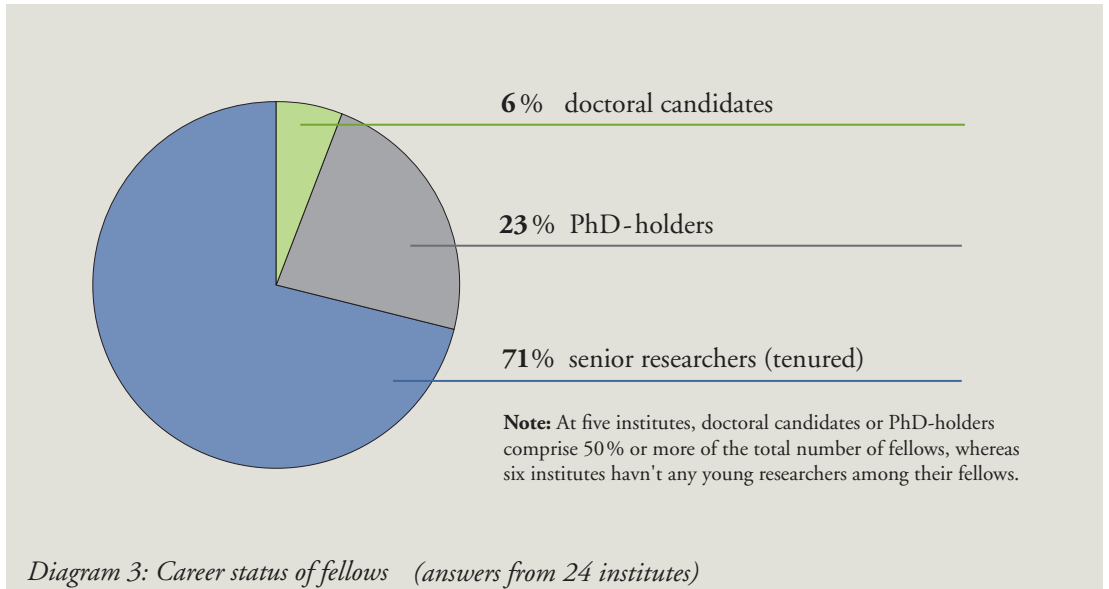
The original idea behind the Princeton IAS was to free researchers from the burdens associated with working at a university – including teaching. In this tradition, most institutes do not have formal teaching requirements, but some expect their fellows to give lectures which may often be public (or at least accessible to a wider university audience), and a small number specifically combine

fellowships with teaching (mainly postgraduate teaching) and stress the importance of teaching or other forms of exchange with young researchers (e.g. acting as supervisor for research students).

Judging from the answers to our questionnaire, most institutes open their events to students, but teaching is usually not required, and only some institutes have specific graduate or postgraduate programmes of their own. At some places there are elaborated programmes and strong efforts to involve students, mostly graduates and doctoral candidates, in the institute's activities; others have a very limited degree of student participation and some none at all. There obviously exists a broad spectrum of possibilities between the strong integration and the total exclusion of students.

(Diagram 3, see following page)

Most institutes are generally open to a wide range, if not all disciplines, but quite a number of them do focus on a smaller set of disciplines, be it from the humanities, the social sciences or the natural and technical sciences. Only some have very strong disciplinary foci or explicit disciplinary exclusions.



A larger number of institutes, rather than identifying themselves through disciplines, announce thematic programmes or particular research fields and gather individual researchers or research groups (from different disciplines) around these topics. Generally speaking, for many institutes the arrangement of their activities around projects or programmes seems to be more attractive than a structure based on the departmental affiliation of fellows. Again, it would be interesting to learn more about the reasoning behind these concepts and about your experience with these different models: What are the advantages and disadvantages of the various options, i.e. of thematic or disciplinary foci as opposed to a broader orientation?

3. SPECIFIC ASPECTS AND GOALS

3.1 INTERDISCIPLINARITY

Interdisciplinarity has become an omnipresent buzzword in the academic world. According to your answers to our questionnaire, almost all institutes confess to a strong interest in the promotion of interdisciplinary research, exchange, collaboration and dialogue. They support and encourage exchange between the disciplines and provide time and space for it. They also stress the interdisciplinary orientation of many of their events. But only some institutes communicate interdisciplinary research as their main objective and criterion for the application and selection of their scholars.

As the definition and practice of interdisciplinarity seems to be one of the most challenging objectives, we would like to look at this aspect in some more detail:

- There are rather light forms of interdisciplinary exchange, e.g. interdisciplinary conferences with participants from different disciplines looking at one subject from different perspectives; or general/informal exchange between fellows from different disciplines. This kind of exchange seems to be very common.

- Stronger forms of interdisciplinary exchange include actual collaboration in joint research projects between fellows from neighbouring disciplines (e.g. between historians and archaeologists or between mathematicians and theoretical biologists).

- Strong forms of interdisciplinary exchange include collaboration between different “academic cultures” (e.g. between fellows from the humanities and natural sciences), thus crossing established boundaries between the academic disciplines/cultures.

An interesting German example for this kind of strong interdisciplinary setting is the Zentrum für Interdisziplinäre Forschung (ZIF) in Bielefeld, where interdisciplinary research groups (drawing scholars from different disciplines) build the core of the institute; we have seen similar institutional arrangements at other places.

3.2 RELATIONS BETWEEN UBIAS AND THE UNIVERSITY

The very coining of the term UBIAS suggests that the specific relationship between an Institute for Advanced Study of this particular type and the university it is based at or affiliated to is a key-feature of its identity and therefore deserves special attention. Through our questionnaire we wanted to learn more about this special constellation: How is your institute integrated into the larger institutional framework of your university? To what extent is it dependent on the university and how high is its degree of autonomy?

Relations between research centres of our special kind and ‘their’ universities at large concern different levels: in terms of governance it is interesting to describe administrative, financial and scientific autonomy as opposed to patterns of dependency. The following constellation seems to be representative for a large number of institutes: they are relatively autonomous in their academic and research curriculum, yet strongly dependent with respect to their financial budget and usually closely linked to the university’s administration. Nevertheless, there are also a few cases of budget-

ary autonomy. But most institutes depend, to some extent at least, on their university’s funding (combined with other sources like state funding, private donations or endowments). In times and contexts of limited, often shrinking university budgets, finding alternative ways of funding, not the least from private sources, seems to be one of the most important and challenging tasks for the future.

What are the benefits of the IAS for the university? Or, quoting an idea from one of the answers to our questionnaire: Is an IAS an important and invigorating elixir to the university or just pure luxury? In our opinion – and in accordance with many answers in the questionnaire – Institutes for Advanced Study ideally function as incubators for innovative research fields and assemble a critical mass of outstanding researchers who, benefitting from relatively favourable conditions and making the best productive use of them, produce outstanding research. Thus, research centres can inject energy into the research culture of the university and enhance the university’s academic excellence and visibility.

IAS can play an equally important role in the internationalisation of their universities by attracting international top-level researchers and connecting them with the local academic community. Of course, there are considerable differences regarding the extent to which members of the faculties are integrated into the institute, or the degree to which university students and teachers join forces in fruitful contact with the fellows of the research institute.

Beyond describing perceivable benefits for the universities it does seem legitimate, however, to ask yet another, somewhat wider question: To what extent does the institute play back into society at large? This leads to the question of public outreach, which was often mentioned in the questionnaires: apart from offering typical academic “formats” such as seminars, conferences, workshops and lectures, some institutes in particular emphasise their role as public “think tanks” and

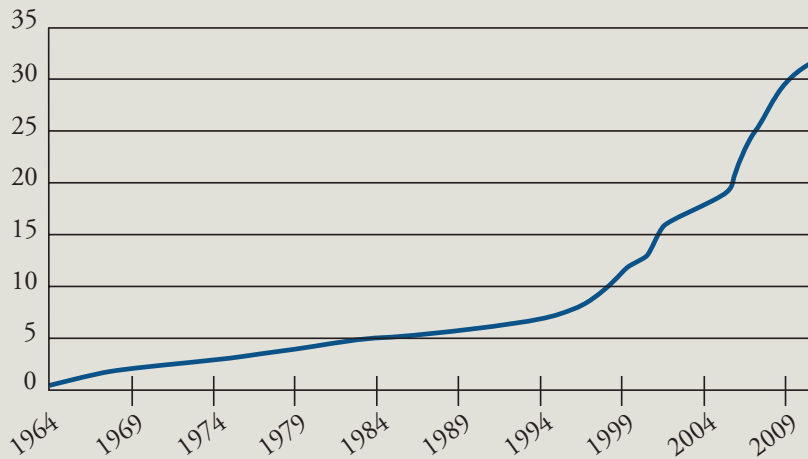


Diagram 4: Year of founding of participating institutes (answers from 29 institutes)

put a lot of effort into planning events of greater public outreach and resonance – such as public lectures – explicitly aspiring to public attention, impact, and debate. Some institutes also engage with the arts, staging art exhibitions or offering fellowships for artists in residence. It would be interesting to learn more about your respective ventures in this direction.

3.3 NETWORKING, INTERACTION

International and/or inter-institutional collaboration and exchange are considered highly important features by all institutes. But again there are varying forms and degrees of collaboration – from loose contact to formal agreements and partnerships. Almost all of the institutes already interact on national and/or international levels, and some are members of pre-existing networks like SIAS (the association of “Some Institutes for Advanced Study”, founded by a number of renowned IAS of the autonomous Princeton type), NetIAS (a network of European IAS) or CHCI (the well established international Consortium of Humanities Centers and Institutes). A number of other institutes have defined formal partnerships with selected institutes of their own choice.

4. IAS AND THE FUTURE OF THE UNIVERSITY

Overall, our findings show that UBIAS are an institutional type flexible enough to adapt to very different local conditions, yet at the same time consisting of a recognisable set of relatively stable features and characteristics. Looking at these will help us to interpret the last finding from our small questionnaire: considering the founding dates of the institutes assembled at the conference, a steep rise since the late 1990s becomes apparent. And this holds true although the concept of the IAS, and even that of the IAS connected to a university, is everything but new. (*Diagram 4*)

Of course, this diagram poses the question of how things will develop in the next few years. Are we going to witness the foundation of yet more UBIAS in the years to come? And what will their specific function be in the wider picture of higher education and research worldwide?

One assumption, a rather defensive one, could be that a number of universities, unable to thoroughly transform the whole of their institutional setup, might instead be tempted to concentrate financial and intellectual resources in such centres

and use them as flagships or figureheads, diverting attention from the shortcomings of the larger “rest” of the university. In the face of continuing budget cuts in many countries and the inability or unwillingness of many state governments to invest substantially into their underfinanced universities, this might be a strategy we have to reckon with.

A more optimistic view might perceive UBIAS as laboratories, an experimental and vicarious playground where universities contemplate in which direction to transform themselves in the future. UBIAS would then be an indicator for the need of such processes of re-orientation – and might themselves be a helpful tool in steering this change. In this vein, it seems legitimate to ask what kind of lessons our experience with the particular institution that is an UBIAS could teach us about the future development of universities at large.

With these different driving forces in mind, let us briefly consider five core aspects of the UBIAS concept and discuss them both as indicators of possible shortcomings of universities as a whole and as indicators of how the transformation of universities might proceed in the years to come.

The key-component of all UBIAS activities is probably that of bringing academics from different universities, countries and continents together for a duration long enough to allow for dense communication and personal acquaintance. These, in turn, form the basis for all meaningful and productive academic collaboration. IAS in a certain sense occupy the middle ground between meeting at a conference and hiring academics for longer periods or on a permanent basis. Evidently, many universities feel the need to better support such medium-term exchange.

Secondly – as we have seen – most IAS do stress the individual personality and profile of the academics invited. IAS explicitly are not just integrated research institutions. Rather, an important part of their work is to grant their fellows the freedom to pursue projects of their own choosing. From a German perspective (and perhaps from other national backgrounds as well) this can be inter-

preted as a counter-reaction against the managerialism and the ensuing red tape that often characterises today’s university life. Although this sort of freedom takes on different forms in different disciplinary areas, the idea behind it appeals to the humanities as well as to the social and natural sciences. Should we not wish for other parts of the university to enjoy the same freedom? Or is this wishful thinking?

Thirdly, we might interpret the growing number of UBIAS as a means for universities to reassure themselves about the culture of academic life. This is very much about the lost intimacy and intensity of dialogue, which sadly characterises the realities of many of today’s universities in a mass higher education system. The established IAS evidently function as an inspiration in this respect. Do not all modern universities feel the drawbacks of their size and experience the massive division of labour in modern research environments as obstacles for communication and exchange?

Fourthly, UBIAS are a symbolic acknowledgment of universities’ self-obligation to give extra support to high-level research and to commit themselves to very high standards of excellence. These, of course, need to be upheld across the whole of our respective universities. To safeguard these standards is surely one of the most important tasks in all university leadership. In this perspective, UBIAS may serve as a constant example or reminder for upholding the highest quality standards.

Finally, a surprising aspect of this boom of newly established IAS may be that this is a type of institution that emphatically excludes teaching. Isn’t it a surprising twist that universities are adopting a model – IAS – that once was an explicit alternative to universities and their overload of teaching and training? Surely UBIAS are not just another university department. How then can we explain that such institutions prosper at a time when the world’s leading universities almost unanimously stress the continuing importance of integrating teaching and research? This holds true for Germa-

ny as well, where the ideas of Humboldt are still an important orientation mark. UBIAS certainly cannot be a model for universities in this respect. However, we do feel that, in many ways, high-level research within universities does need additional – or better – support. If UBIAS succeed in this respect, this in turn opens up the possibility of reintegrating advanced and graduate students, providing valuable opportunities for them to participate in research and academic discourse at a truly advanced level. As there are certain tensions between these different aims, we can perceive different viable solutions. Obviously, we have an important topic to discuss here.

5. CONCLUSION

In this brief presentation we have tried to give you a first glimpse of the kind of self-description of a representative group of UBIAS institutes: just a first impression of different institutional designs and setups, of the core characteristics as well as of the manifold varieties and options linked with the realities of existing UBIAS institutes in their specific local contexts around the globe. We firmly hope that this conference will provide orientation and stimulation for the further development of our existing institutes, as well as encourage all those universities worldwide that are presently considering the establishment of similar institutes. The future of the university in the 21st century and the role of UBIAS in the further advancement of academic research are topics of truly global importance that concern us all, and we do look forward to hearing your views on these exciting matters in the further course of this conference.

Prof. Dr. Werner Frick

Dr. Carsten Dose

Dr. Anna Ertel
(FRIAS)

UBIAS THROUGHOUT



THE WORLD





DOCUMENTATION

THE WORLD OF UBIAS: COHERENCE AND DIVERSITY

At the start of each working session, the panellists presented their institutes to the audience. The individual presentations underlined the fact that the institutes assembled share a number of core attitudes towards research and that all of them support the idea of providing an ideal working environment as a pre-condition for excellent research. At the same time, the institutes showed a wide range of different arrangements, setups and formats to reach their aims. The world of UBIAS thus seems to be coherent and diverse at the same time; and the model of an IAS turned out to be a very flexible instrument for promoting high-level research in adaption to the particular needs caused by institutional, local or national circumstances. To put it more directly: an IAS affiliated to a renowned research university of a long-standing tradition will naturally have a somewhat different function to an IAS in an emerging market country, and both institutions will face different expectations, needs, and challenges.

UBIAS AND THE SCOPE OF ACADEMIC DISCIPLINES

Traditionally, IAS serve the basic idea of promoting high-level research in select areas of academic disciplines. But which disciplines are to be selected and fostered by an IAS? What are the needs of different disciplines? Three sessions of the conference dealt with these questions, looking at the full range of disciplines as well as considering disciplinary focuses on the humanities and social sciences on the one hand and on the natural sciences on the other.

INCLUDING NATURAL SCIENCES

Traditionally, many IAS are characterised by a special focus on the humanities and the social sciences. Whereas some IAS have integrated theoretical fields of natural sciences, the integration of *experimental* and *lab sciences* into the institutional concept seems to be a rather rare and relatively recent phenomenon. This general perception was



sion showed that IAS do hold certain opportunities for natural scientists and science departments. IAS attract outstanding researchers, both senior and junior scientists, who, by using the university's laboratories and facilities, get in touch with local researchers and international co-fellows and contribute to the international crosslinking of the universities. Also, well equipped junior researchers who receive excellent training at an IAS could be passed on to the university's departments at a later stage of their career. In this way, IAS are not competing with the university, but rather serving as a complementary institution.

HUMANITIES IN CRISIS?

As mentioned above, IAS have traditionally focused on the humanities and – to a lesser degree – on the social sciences. Consequently, one of the conference sessions was dedicated to this topic. Starting with questions regarding the different formats and methods to provide an ideal research environment for academics in these disciplines, the discussion soon switched into a discourse about the crisis of the humanities and the perceived threat of marginalisation. While the participants agreed on the relevance of humanities to society and the responsibility that IAS have in this field, it was also stated that this responsibility, however, should not lead to a situation in which the humanities have to justify their research permanently in terms of outcome. Policies to judge the relevance of research by its profitability were jointly seen as a great threat to the humanities, as it has a very practical impact on the distribution of funding. Given this situation where humanities are weakened at the universities, IAS could possibly become a place where different rules are applied and where academics preserve the option of failure, which was considered an important aspect of creativity and excellence in research generally. The discussion about the special needs of research in the humanities also included the question of which language should be spoken at an IAS, where international researchers from different countries and nationalities come and work together. Many

confirmed during the conference; however some institutes presented successful ways of overcoming possible difficulties. The question of whether and how experimental sciences and lab work can be integrated into the concept of an IAS was one of the central aspects of the discussion.

It became apparent that in many cases the focus on the humanities and the social sciences is partly due to certain practical restrictions. If an UBIAS decides to give fellowships to natural and life science researchers, it faces certain problems: a major problem being the fact that experimental sciences require laboratories – which institutes often can't provide. Most IAS do not have the financial means to offer an adequate research environment to experimental scientists. Problems also occur as natural scientists often can't leave their laboratories for a long time. It is much easier for researchers in the humanities or the social sciences to spend some time away from their home university. Another difficulty lies in the fact that lab scientists have to spend a large amount of time in their laboratories which are often not located in the main IAS building – thus academic exchange (beyond informal meetings), which so many IAS see as a major task of their work, is sometimes hindered. As a consequence, the question was raised of whether it makes sense at all to combine experimental sciences with the idea of an IAS. However, the discus-







institutes use English as a basic tool for communication, but in quite a number of different disciplines other national languages do play an important role and should not be neglected for the benefit of a uniform *lingua franca*.

The language problem was also raised on another level: apart from the different languages spoken at an international research institute, the different disciplines also have their different sub-languages which need to be “translated” or made transparent to each other by constant self-reflection. This issue becomes especially important when interdisciplinary research is involved.

THE CHALLENGES OF INTERDISCIPLINARITY

Interdisciplinarity is a central mission of many UBIAS. In the session dedicated to this topic, many of the participating institutes stressed their openness towards a wide range of disciplines and their efforts to bring together people from different disciplines by following the idea of overcoming traditional disciplinary boundaries.

But what are we talking about when we talk about interdisciplinarity, a term that has become a buzz word these days? The discussion partly focused on the problem that the term “interdisciplinar-

ity” lacks a clear definition and is used in many different ways. Also the use and benefit of interdisciplinary research was questioned: What can it actually provide that cannot be provided by disciplinary research? Three reasons were suggested for taking an interdisciplinary approach: to take different perspectives when investigating something, to look for answers that can only be provided by other disciplines, to appreciate the irritation when other academics are using similar instruments in different disciplinary settings. And what are the suitable formats for enabling fruitful exchange across the disciplines? How can the risk of remaining on a superficial level be prevented? Can interdisciplinarity be stimulated by defining research programmes and themes that require interdisciplinary approaches by research groups, or is interdisciplinarity something that happens bottom-up and/or can only develop spontaneously, as one participant suggested? The discussion made clear that sincere interdisciplinarity is a great challenge; it needs open-mindedness and the willingness as well as the ability to share knowledge and ideas on all sides.

This also raised the issue of topic-driven research. Quite a number of institutes provide fellowships for interdisciplinary research groups gathering around a certain theme. If research is organised around different topics, it may be questioned who is in charge of determining them. Some IAS advertise themes that they deem important, while others are open to proposals including valuable research topics. The discussion focused on the various decision-making levels and the challenges of this demanding selection process.

Whilst stressing the importance of promoting interdisciplinary research, it was also stated that successful monodisciplinary research remains the basis for fruitful interdisciplinary research and should thus not be neglected at UBIAS. Still it remains a great challenge: how to combine disciplinary and interdisciplinary research and how to find suitable programmes and formats to allow interaction.

CREATING TIME AND SPACE FOR RESEARCH – BALANCING THE FOCUS ON INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH AND THE WISH FOR SOCIAL/ INTERDISCIPLINARY INTERACTION

One of the sessions dealt with questions concerning adequate formats and methods to create a productive research environment at an IAS.

Not surprisingly, time, space and infrastructure were identified as crucial elements. Some institutes are in the comfortable position of having a building especially designed for their particular needs. Thus they can provide offices, conference rooms, space for socialising, lunch facilities etc. The built environment of course adds to a feeling of identity and belonging and a suitable building also increases the visibility of an IAS as an outstanding place for research. At the same time, IAS benefit from the existing infrastructure of the universities, like libraries or laboratories, especially when located in the middle of the university or close to the main facilities.

A topic of great interest to all participants was the quest of balancing individual needs and the institutions' aim of fostering interaction and exchange. There is a general trend towards funding collaborative research, especially when interdisciplinary research is involved. Thus, UBIAS need to provide facilities that meet very different needs: Space for individual research as well as space and facilities for scientific and social exchange. Sometimes these two needs are conflicting and need to be balanced: Given the fact that scientific work at times needs seclusion and privacy in order to elaborate new ideas (before sharing and discussing them with colleagues, which seems equally important to mature new concepts and ideas), the extent of interaction and exchange has to be measured carefully. UBIAS are generally very lively places that offer a broad range of academic seminars, lectures, colloquia etc. and also a number of cultural and social events. The challenge is to find an adequate level of fellow interaction and commitment and to define reasonable "rules" in order to create a productive research environ-



ment. These rules relate to questions regarding the amount of time fellows should be present at their institutes (especially in the case of natural and experimental scientists who work in laboratories), or the extent of exemption from teaching during their fellowship.

Instead of identifying universal answers to these questions the discussion provided important insights by identifying potential conflicts and sharing experiences made at the different places/institutes.



UBIAS WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY – SOMETHING DIFFERENT, SOMETHING SPECIAL

The common defining feature of UBIAS is their affiliation to a university. Thus the relations and interplay between IAS and their universities – including ways of interacting, possible tensions and divergences of interest – were central topics of the conference. The questions of how UBIAS can safeguard their autonomy and enhance the university's performance at the same time, and which degree of autonomy would be favourable for an UBIAS, were discussed intensely. In the same

context participants dealt with the main functions and purposes of an IAS within the university. The main purpose of an IAS was predominantly seen in the fostering of scholarly excellence. It was argued that this aim can be threatened when an IAS becomes a tool solely for boosting the image of the university.

Ideally, an IAS does not duplicate the structures that are already provided by the faculties – but adds something new, something different from the rest of the university (and something that makes a difference to other universities, too, creating differences not only within a single university but also between several universities). It was stated that, apart from providing excellent infrastructures, an IAS can for example serve as a neutral space where hierarchical boundaries which are still present in the faculties are diminished. Also, IAS can explicitly promote innovative projects which do not fit into the normal departmental research – like avant-garde interdisciplinary projects or high-risk projects. Some UBIAS also include artists in their work – adding a dimension that might be lacking otherwise and in this way creating unique opportunities for the whole institute and its community of fellows.

In structural terms, many UBIAS are part of the university (and often funded by it), but not part of the faculties. Many institutes clearly define strong responsibilities towards their university – and this is certainly not only due to financial and structural dependencies: fellows are encouraged to collaborate with the faculty members, fellows are engaged in teaching, fellows are drawn from the faculties to strengthen the local research, joint seminars etc. are organised, and many institutes put a lot of effort into their outreach into the university (and society, too). There is great interest in maintaining the university's support and in raising awareness of the work of the institute within the university. UBIAS seek to avoid the image of an ivory tower, where a small number of researchers dedicate themselves to their isolated research. Quite the opposite in fact, it was stated that it is

very important to keep the departments and faculties updated about the institutes and their programmes and to encourage active participation, cooperation and joint ventures with colleagues in the faculties. Furthermore, UBIAS can serve their universities in very specific ways: they can function as a recruitment centre, where talented young researchers receive excellent training and are then “handed over” to the universities/faculties. But despite collaboration and interaction with the university and despite dependency in terms of staff, administrative infrastructures and funding, many UBIAS claim their academic autonomy and freedom regarding the scientific programme of the institute.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS – FUNDING UBIAS

The financial situation varies a lot between countries and universities. Nonetheless, finances concern all UBIAS and were thus given space in one of the conference sessions, where the participants shared their experiences.

Many UBIAS are funded by their universities, and some receive state or private funding. Quite a number of UBIAS are not secured in terms of funding, e.g. the German institutes which were founded in the context of the Excellence Initiative 2007 for a funding period of five years only (and now have to compete to receive further funding, again for a limited period only). Alternatively, ways of raising extra money from private donors were discussed. Funding research on a private basis is not too common in many countries except the United States and Canada, where there is a long tradition of private donations to higher education institutions. Fundraising faces very practical problems in many countries (e.g. tax regulations). But away from these obstacles, the discussion made clear that fundraising will become more and more important for UBIAS in times of unstable public funding. Those participants who have experience in this field stressed that efficient fundraising needs a great number of staff and dedicated peo-



ple who know how to deal with possible investors in a careful and patient way. Also the question was raised as to if and how the danger of privatisation applies to UBIAS funded by private money.

CONNECTING THE WORLD OF UBIAS

The conference was intended to help identify areas of common interest and networking possibilities. In the last working session the participants shared their experiences of different forms of cooperation between institutes (from loose networks to formalised contacts between institutes). This issue was then taken up in the concluding plenary debate of the conference, raising the question of how cooperation between UBIAS can be implemented in the future.

The plenum expressed a strong wish for further exchange between the different UBIAS all over the world. Taking the Freiburg conference as a starting point, an international network of university-based IAS with regular meetings and exchange of information, maybe even joint programmes and exchange of scholars, was suggested (see following pages).



*World map by Martin Waldseemüller
(from the University of Freiburg, Template Schloss Wolfegg,
Leutkirch)*

RESOLUTIONS FROM THE CONFERENCE: FORMING A NETWORK OF UBIAS

In the closing session, the participants agreed on the following resolutions:

1. To enable structured forms of exchange a worldwide network of university-based institutes will be set up.
2. Conferences will be held every 2–3 years (with alternation of hosting institutes).
3. The conference's participants resolved to form a Steering Committee of 11 institutes from all continents. The members are:
 - Stellenbosch IAS, Africa
 - Sao Paulo IAS, South America
 - Peter Wall IAS, Vancouver, North America
 - Stanford Humanities Center, Palo Alto, North America
 - Fudan IAS, Asia
 - IAR Nagoya, Asia
 - IAS Jerusalem, Middle East
 - IAS Perth, Australia
 - Helsinki IAS, Europe
 - Réseau Français des Instituts d'Études Avancées (RFIEA), Europe
 - Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies, Europe
4. The committee is to suggest further steps. There will be an UBIAS website to share all relevant information (www.ubias.net).
5. The planned network is open to all university-based IAS.



PARTICIPANTS

AFRICA:

**Stellenbosch Institute
for Advanced Study (STIAS),
Stellenbosch**

Prof. Hendrik Geyer, Director
Prof. Bernard Lategan,
Founding Director

**Instituto de Estudos
Avançados (IEA),
Universidade de São Paulo**
Prof. César Ades, Director

**Stanford Humanities Center,
Stanford University,
Palo Alto, CA**
Prof. Aron Rodrigue, Director

AMERICAS:

**Radcliffe Institute
for Advanced Study, Harvard
University, Cambridge, MA**
Prof. Judith Vichniac, Associate
Dean of Fellowship Program

**Peter Wall Institute for
Advanced Studies (PWIAS),
University of British
Columbia, Vancouver**
Prof. Dianne Newell, Director
Sonya Wall, Trustee

**Centro de Estudos Avançados
(CEAv), Universidade
Estadual de Campinas**
Prof. Pedro Paulo A. Funari,
Head

**John Hope Franklin
Humanities Institute, Duke
University, Durham, NC**
Dr. Christina Chia, Assistant
Director for Programs and
Communications

ASIA:

**Institute for Advanced
Research (IAR),
Nagoya University**
Prof. Dapeng Cai, Associate
Professor / Core Faculty
Member

Institute for Advanced Studies in Humanities and Social Sciences (IAS), Nanjing University
Prof. Yunquian Chen,
 Scholar-in-Residence

Jawaharlal Nehru Institute of Advanced Study (JNIAS), Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi
Prof. Aditya Mukherjee,
 Director

Nehru Memorial Museum & Library (NMML), New Delhi
Prof. Mridula Mukherjee,
 Director

Korea Institute for Advanced Study (KIAS), Seoul
Prof. Doochul Kim, President

Fudan Institute for Advanced Study in Social Sciences, Fudan University, Shanghai
Prof. Zhenglai Deng, Dean

Prof. Sujian Guo, Vice Dean Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities and Social Sciences (IHS), National Taiwan University, Taipei
Prof. Kirill Ole Thompson,
 Associate Dean
Prof. Chien-fu Jeff Lin,
 Associate Dean
Prof. Chao-ying Chen,
 Executive Director and
 Research Fellow

Waseda Institute for Advanced Study (WIAS), Waseda University, Tokyo
Prof. Hideaki Miyajima,
 Director
Hiroshi Honda,
 Office Manager
Kumi Komatsu, Administrator

AUSTRALIA:

Institute of Advanced Studies (IAS), University of Western Australia, Perth
Prof. Terri-ann White,
 Director

MIDDLE EAST:

Institute for Advanced Studies (IAS), Hebrew University of Jerusalem
Prof. Eliezer Rabinovici,
 Director

EUROPE:

Istituto di Studi Avanzati (IAS), Università di Bologna
Dr. Barbara Cimatti,
 Coordinator for International Relations

Collegium Budapest, Budapest
Dr. Andrew Sors, Rector

Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (CRASSH), University of Cambridge
Prof. Simon Goldhill,
 Director Designate

Trinity Long Room Hub, Trinity College Dublin
Prof. Poul Holm, Academic
 Director

Institute of Advanced Study, Durham University
Prof. Michael O'Neill,
 Executive Director

Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies, University of Helsinki
Prof. Sami Pihlström,
 Director
Dr. Kustaa Multamäki, Head
 of Planning and Development
Maria Soukkio, Programme
 Coordinator

School of Advanced Study (SAS), University of London
Prof. Barry C. Smith,
 Associate Dean

Réseau Français des Instituts d'Études Avancées (RFIEA), Lyon
Dr. Olivier Bouin, Director,
 RFIEA; Secretary, Network of
 European Institutes for
 Advanced Studies (NetIAS)

Maison Interuniversitaire des Sciences de l'Homme - Alsace (MISHA), Université de Strasbourg
Prof. Christine Maillard,
 Director
Gilles Bloch, Secretary-General

Collegium Helveticum, Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zürich (ETHZ)/ Universität Zürich
Prof. Gerd Folkers, Director



GERMANY:

**Center for Interdisciplinary Research (ZiF),
Universität Bielefeld**

Prof. Philippe Blanchard, Deputy Managing Director
Prof. Ulrike Davy, Member, Board of Directors
Dr. Britta Padberg, Executive Secretary

**Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies (FRIAS),
Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg**

Prof. Werner Frick, Speaker, FRIAS Board of Directors; Director, FRIAS School of Language & Literature

Prof. Hermann Grabert, Vice Speaker, FRIAS Board of Directors; Director, FRIAS School of Soft Matter Research

Prof. Peter Auer, Director, FRIAS School of Language & Literature

Prof. Leena Bruckner-Tuderman, Director, FRIAS School of Life Sciences – LifeNet

Prof. Ulrich Herbert, Director, FRIAS School of History

Prof. Jan Korvink, Director, FRIAS School of Soft Matter Research

Prof. Jörn Leonhard, Director, FRIAS School of History

Prof. Jens Timmer, Director, FRIAS School of Life Sciences – Life Net

Dr. Carsten Dose, Head Administrator

Lichtenberg-Kolleg, Georg-August Universität Göttingen

Dr. Dominik Hünninger,
Scientific Coordinator

Center for Advanced Studies (CAS), Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München

Prof. Christof Rapp,
Academic Director

Dr. Annette Meyer,
Managing Director

Dr. Sonja Asal, Academic
Advisor

TUM Institute for Advanced Study, Technische Universität München

Prof. Patrick Dewilde,
Director

Dr. Markus Zanner,
Managing Director

Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg

Prof. Hans-Jochen Schiewer,
Rector

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Prof. Philip Altbach, Center for International Higher Education (CIHE), Boston College, Boston, MA

Klaus Tappeser, Head of Department, Ministry of Science, Research and the Arts, State of Baden-Württemberg

SCIENCE ORGANISATIONS

Dr. Dagmar Eberle, Program Manager, Mercator Research Center, Essen

Dr. Karsten Kumoll, Consultant, German Council of Science and Humanities (Wissenschaftsrat), Köln

Dr. Felix Streiter, Project Manager, Stiftung Mercator, Essen



ADDRESS LIST **AFRICA:**

Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Study (STIAS)

Mostertsdrift
Private Bag X1
Matieland 7602
SOUTH AFRICA
hbg@sun.ac.za
www.stias.ac.za

John Hope Franklin Humanities Institute

Smith Warehouse, Bays 4 & 5,
1st Floor
Box 90403
Duke University
114 S. Buchanan Blvd.
Durham, NC 27708-0403
USA
fhi@duke.edu
www.fhi.duke.edu

AMERICAS:

Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study

10 Garden Street
Cambridge, MA 02138
USA
info@radcliffe.edu
www.radcliffe.edu

Instituto de Estudos Avançados (IEA)

Universidade de São Paulo
Av. Prof. Luciano Gualberto
Travessa J, 374, C.P. 12.072
CEP 05508-970
São Paulo, SP
BRAZIL
iea@usp.br
www.iea.usp.br

Centro de Estudos Avançados (CEAv)

Universidade Estadual de Campinas

Cidade Universitária “Zeferino Vaz”

Caixa Postal 6194
Barão Geraldo - Campinas - SP
CEP - 13.083-872
BRAZIL
ceav@reitoria.unicamp.br
www.gr.unicamp.br/ceav

Stanford Humanities Center

424 Santa Teresa Street
Stanford, California
94305-4015
USA
humanities-center@stanford.edu
http://shc.stanford.edu/

Peter Wall Institute for Advanced Studies University Centre University of British Columbia

6331 Crescent Road
Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z2
CANADA
info@pwias.ubc.ca
www.pwias.ubc.ca

ASIA:

Institute for Advanced Research (IAR)

Nagoya University

Furo-cho, Chikusa-ku

Nagoya-city

464-8601

JAPAN

iar@post.jimu.nagoya-u.ac.jp

www.iar.nagoya-u.ac.jp

Institute for Advanced Studies in Humanities and Social Sciences (IAS)

Nanjing University

9th floor, Yi Fu Building

22 Hankou Road

Nanjing Jiangsu 210093

P.R.CHINA

ias@nju.edu.cn

www.ias.nju.edu.cn

Jawaharlal Nehru Institute of Advanced Study (JNIAS)

Jawaharlal Nehru University

New Delhi 110067

INDIA

jnias@mail.jnu.ac.in

www.jnu.ac.in/JNIAS

Nehru Memorial Museum & Library (NMML) New Delhi

Teen Murti Bhawan

New Delhi - 110011

INDIA

directornehrumemorial@gmail.com

com

www.nehrumemorial.com

Korea Institute for Advanced Study (KIAS)

87 Hoegiro, Dongdaemun-gu

KR-Seoul 130-722

KOREA

president@kias.re.kr

www.kias.re.kr

Fudan Institute for Advanced Study in Social Sciences

2807, East Main Building,

Guang Hua Tower

Fudan University

220 Handan Road

Shanghai, 200433

P.R. CHINA

ias-fudan@fudan.edu.cn

www.ias.fudan.edu.cn

Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities and Social Sciences (IHS)

National Taiwan University

No.1, Sec.4, Roosevelt Road

Da-an District

Taipei City 10617

TAIWAN, R.O.C.

ntuihs@ntu.edu.tw

www.ihs.ntu.edu.tw

Waseda Institute for Advanced Study (WIAS)

Waseda University

1-6-1 Nishi Waseda

Shinjuku-ku

Tokyo 169-8050

JAPAN

wias-info@list.waseda.jp

www.waseda.jp/wias





AUSTRALIA:

Institute of Advanced Studies (IAS)

The University of Western Australia

35 Stirling Highway
Crawley, Perth
WESTERN AUSTRALIA
6009
ias@uwa.edu.au
www.ias.uwa.edu.au

MIDDLE EAST:

The Institute for Advanced Studies of Jerusalem (IAS)
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Edmond J. Safra, Givat Ram
Campus
Jerusalem
ISRAEL 91904
advanc@vms.huji.ac.il
www.as.huji.ac.il

EUROPE:

Istituto di Studi Avanzati (IAS)

Alma Mater Studiorum – Università di Bologna at Residenza di Studi Superiori

Via Mario Fantin 15
40131 Bologna BO
ITALY
secretary.isa@unibo.it
www.isa.unibo.it

Collegium Budapest

Szentháromság u. 2
H-1014 Budapest
HUNGARY
info@colbud.hu
www.colbud.hu

Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (CRASSH), University of Cambridge

17 Mill Lane
Cambridge CB2 1RX
UK
enquiries@crash.cam.ac.uk
www.crash.cam.ac.uk

Trinity Long Room Hub Trinity College Dublin College Green

Dublin 2
IRELAND
lrhub@tcd.ie
www.tcd.ie/longroomhub

**Institute of Advanced Study
Cosin's Hall**

Palace Green
Durham
DH1 3RL
UK
enquiries.ias@durham.ac.uk
www.dur.ac.uk/ias

**Helsinki Collegium for
Advanced Studies,
University of Helsinki**

P.O. Box 4
00014 University of Helsinki
FINLAND
collegium-office@helsinki.fi
www.helsinki.fi/collegium

**School of Advanced Study
University of London**

Senate House
Malet Street
London WC1E 7HU
UK
Deans.office@sas.ac.uk
www.sas.ac.uk

**Réseau Français des Instituts
d'Études Avancées (RFIEA)**

15, parvis René Descartes
69007 Lyon
FRANCE
contact@rfiea.fr
www.rfiea.fr

**Maison Interuniversitaire des
Sciences de l'Homme –
Alsace (MISHA),
Université de Strasbourg**

5, allée du Général Rouvillois
CS 50008
67083 Strasbourg cedex
FRANCE
communication@misha.fr
www.misha.fr

**Collegium Helveticum,
Eidgenössische Technische
Hochschule Zürich (ETHZ)/
Universität Zürich**

Semper-Sternwarte
Schmelzbergstr. 25
8092 Zürich
SWITZERLAND
info@collegium.ethz.ch
www.collegium.ethz.ch

GERMANY:

**Center for Interdisciplinary
Research (ZiF)
Universität Bielefeld**

Wellenberg 1
33615 Bielefeld
GERMANY
zif@uni-bielefeld.de
www.uni-bielefeld.de/ZIF

**Freiburg Institute for
Advanced Studies (FRIAS)**

Albert-Ludwigs-Universität
Freiburg
Albertstraße 19
79104 Freiburg
GERMANY
info@frias.uni-freiburg.de
www.frias.uni-freiburg.de

**Lichtenberg-Kolleg
Historische Sternwarte der
Universität Göttingen**

Geismar Landstraße 11
37083 Göttingen
GERMANY
lichtenbergkolleg@zvw.uni-
goettingen.de
www.lichtenbergkolleg.uni-
goettingen.de

**Center for Advanced Studies
(CAS)**

**Ludwig-Maximilians-
Universität München**
Geschwister-Scholl-Platz 1
80539 München
GERMANY
info@cas.lmu.de
www.cas.uni-muenchen.de

**TUM Institute for Advanced
Study**

**Technische Universität
München**

Lichtenbergstraße 2 a
85748 Garching
GERMANY
info@tum-ias.de
www.tum-ias.de

LEGAL INFORMATION

Editor:
Freiburg Institute for Advanced
Studies (FRIAS)
Albert-Ludwigs-Universität
Freiburg
Albertstr. 19
D-79104 Freiburg
www.frias.uni-freiburg.de

Editing:
Prof. Dr. Werner Frick,
Speaker, FRIAS Board
of Directors
Dr. Carsten Dose,
Head Administrator
Dr. Anna Ertel, Personal
Assistant to the Speaker
Karin Bundschuh, Press and
Public Relations

Assistance
(conference minutes):
Frauke Janzen
Ruth Schiemanowski

Pictures:
Britt Schilling,
Hans Peter Trefzer, Freiburg

Layout:
Ulrike Höllwarth,
Michael Wiesinger, Freiburg

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