

## **Minutes: General Assembly of the Centre for African Studies and Constitutional Meeting of the Centre for African Studies – Research Network Africa**

**8 June 2018, 14h15-17h00**

### Present

Jasmina Saric, Rita Kesselring, Melanie Rütishuser, Brigit Obrist, Sonja Merten, Noemi Steuer, Jürg Schneider, Pascal Schmid, Till Förster, Manuel Herz, Andreas Heuser, Kenny Cupers, Kadiatou Diallo, Fiona Siegenthaler, Melanie Boehi, Giorgio Miescher, Lorena Rizzo, Luregn Lenggenhager, Beni Brühwiler, Julia Tischler, Erich Thaler, Lindy Hooman, Jacob Geuder, Julia Büchele, Cedric Duchene, Cassandra Mark-Thiessen, Saaba Kasa, Christian Vandersee, Claudia Daubenberger, Dag Henrichsen, Elísio Macamo, Veit Arlt

### Excused

Christiane Schlotte, Dominik Balthasar, Max Bergman, Guéladio Cissé, Piet van Eeuwijk, Silke Oldenburg, Nicole Probst, Walter Salzburger, Claudia Baez-Camargo, Martin Röösli, Jürg Utzinger, Ralph Weber, Gregor Dobler, Isabelle Chariatte, Andreas Mehler

### Excused for General Assembly

Patricia Schwärzler, Barbara Müller, Christine LeQuellec Cottier, Paul Castle

### **1) Minutes of the General Assembly of 15.12.2017**

The Assembly accepts the minutes of the General Assembly held on 12 December 2017.

### **2) Welcome**

Elísio Macamo (EM) sums up the process that led to the proposed strategy implementation paper and regulations.

### **3) Implementation Document**

The latest version of the document was circulated and the changes are briefly presented to the Assembly.

Key Areas of Activities (KAA) that wish to update the description and add projects and activities are asked to do so by 12 June 2018. The KAA “Arts, Culture and Urbanism” (Till Förster/Kenny Cupers) will submit an updated description.

“Strategic Work Groups” (SWA) were introduced alongside the KAA. They are not statutory units (Organe) in order to limit the number of formal bodies and keep the network flexible. The proposition of the members of the current SWA on Engaged Academia to introduce work groups earlier in the document will be met by adding the commitment to engaged academy to the introduction.

In order to make the flow of communication more transparent the regulations must be published and accessible to all members. Since the revised old regulations of the Centre got stuck in the administration they were not published and there was not enough clarity. The finalized list of members and their affiliation to KAAs and SWGs will provide the basis for targeted communication within the network.

Strategy document and Implementation document will be henceforth circulated together. This was unfortunately not the case for the current meeting when the Strategy document was left out. However, virtually all participants of the meeting had received it at an earlier stage.

The strategy process and the activities of the Centre will be subject of a continuous review by the Steering Group. A systematic review is the core element of the annual retreats. In a first step the activities until 2019 will be reviewed. Reviews must be consistent with the four-year mandate of the steering committee and must speak to the strategic planning periods of the University of Basel.

PhD and MA students and were not involved in the strategy and implementation process since the later required smaller groups allowing for a targeted discussion. The question was asked, whether students ought not to be represented in the Steering Committee. The regulations foresee a representation of group III (i.e. PhD students and Postdocs) in the Steering Committee but not of the group IV. Students do not meet the requirements for formal membership, are not the drivers of research projects on this level, and the mostly short duration of their affiliation at the University of Basel limits the possibility to be involved in a meaningful way in strategic processes. However, they are represented in the relevant body, i.e. the Teaching Board (Unterrichtskommission). Furthermore, the platforms that are open and more relevant for discussion are the thematic meetings within the KAs and the SWAs, for which there are no limitations regarding access and which are far more interesting as platforms in terms of the questions of concern to students and junior scholars at large. Annual Retreats and General Assembly, too, are public. The Steering Committee's main functions is to mediate between the network members (via the KAs, SWGs, Annual Retreat and General Assembly) and the university leadership.

⇒ *The implementation document is accepted with 21:0 with 1 abstention.*

#### **4) Regulations**

Veit Arlt (VA) explains the changes made in the latest version of the regulations that was circulated before the workshop. The short discussion concerns the following points:

Is it not possible to aggregate the data for the Annual Report via the research database? No, this does not work with members who are not at the University. So far the Research Data Base does not adequately reflect the activities of the members of the network. In order to improve the amount of data displayed, members of the network who are members of the University are formally obliged to link the relevant publications and projects with the Centre (currently it is still listed as "Kompetenzzentrum Afrika") and to make their Africa expertise explicit in the personal profile in the database, at least by adding the key words "Africa" and "Afrika".

The proposed KAA Engaged Academia was integrated as a Strategic Work Group.

*The regulations are accepted with 23:0 with 0 abstention*

#### **5) Nominations Steering Committee**

A first table with nominations for the Steering Committee is discussed. It is based on the requirement for representation of Groups I, II and III, KAs, partner institutions, and the need to reflect an adequate gender balance

*Gruppierung I:* Kenny Cupers, Till Förster, Andreas Heuser, Klaus Kuhn, Elísio Macamo, Julia Tischler; *Gruppierung II:* Claudia Baez, Dominik Balthasar, Claudia Daubenberger, Giorgio Miescher, Brigit Obrist, Martin Röösl; *Gruppierung III:* Cassandra Thiesen-Mark; *Partner institutions:* Dag Henrichsen, Marcel Dreier

Julia Tischler (JT) observes that there are no Gruppierung I representatives of the Swiss TPH nominated for the Steering Committee.

KC asks how the nominations were made.

EM explains that most were proposed from within the KAAAs. Some nominated themselves.

VA stresses that the people on the list are nominations and do not have to be elected.

FS asks how the re-election after four years works – whether the KAAAs would elect their representatives.

GM suggests that the KAAAs should find propositions that everybody agrees on.

KC observes a tension between top-down and bottom-up. The KAAAs are limited if members of Gruppierung I are favoured.

VA explains that this is in the context of the logic of the university and argues that it would be an advantage if each KAA would be represented by one Gruppierung I member.

MB asks for appropriate representation of postdocs in the KAAAs.

Lorena Rizzo (LR) observes that it looks embarrassing if a KAA is not represented by any Gruppierung I member.

VA points to the fact that the KAA affiliations are not made explicit on the list of the Steering Committee members.

EM explains the challenge, that according to the regulations at least half of the committee needs to be member of Group I. There are 15 nominations. As only six of these are Group I members only six other members could be elected.

BO expresses that she is ready to step back.

JT proposes to remove no female member from the list in view of the imbalance between nine males and six females.

JS suggests to elect 12 Steering Committee members and to include the other three in the advisory board

VA suggests to include Markus Kalberer which would allow to have 14 members on the Steering Committee in total. In addition, he suggests a stronger representation of the environmental sciences.

EM suggests to take Dominique Balthasar off the list, as KAA1 would be overrepresented and swisspeace as institution could be included via the advisory board.

LR suggests that EM and VA make a proposition to vote on.

MB suggests to vote for each member of the committee separately.

EM suggests to exclude Cassandra Mark-Thiessen, Dag Henrichsen or Marcel Dreier as the strategic work group would be overrepresented.

EM adds that external institutions were overrepresented with two representatives (i.e. Dag Henrichsen and Marcel Dreier).

RK explains that the representation of partner organisations would be too weak with only one Steering Committee member. She suggests having two representatives sharing one vote.

VA rejects the option of several members with one vote, the Steering Group is already big.

DH insists that there should be two representatives of partner organisations in the Steering Committee and points to the roots of the ZASB as well as the current relevance these institutions play in the ZASB's activities.

EM points out that Steering Committee members in the first place represent their academic activities and not their institution. The constitutional character of institutions was removed from the regulations with the last change five years ago. Representatives of the institutions can be invited to the Advisory Board.

EM suggests to leave out the nominations of Marcel Dreier and Dominik Balthasar.

This suggestion is accepted with 13 votes (0 against, 7 abstentions)

Proposed Steering Committee

*Gruppierung I:* Kenny Cupers, Till Förster, Andreas Heuser, Markus Kalberer, Klaus Kuhn, Elísio Macamo, Julia Tischler; *Gruppierung II:* Claudia Baez, Claudia Daubbenberger, Giorgio Miescher, Brigit Obrist, Martin Röösli; *Gruppierung III:* Cassandra Thiesen-Mark; *Partner institutions:* Dag Henrichsen

The proposed Steering Committee is accepted with 13 votes (0 against, 6 abstentions)

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The meeting closes at 17:00