



Graduate School Alumni Newsletter 2020

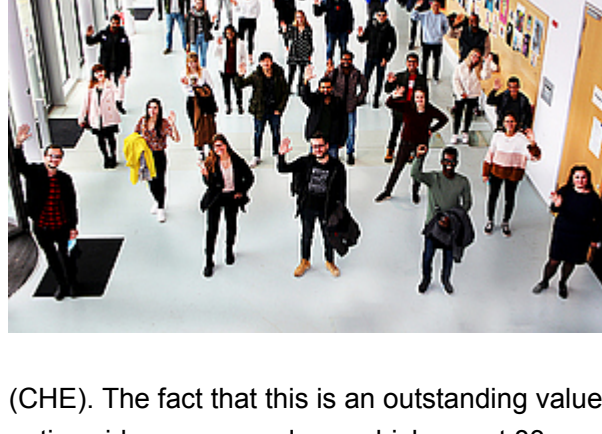
I hope this year's alumni newsletter reaches you in good health and good spirits. The 2020 year has certainly been an extraordinary and challenging year for all of us. COVID19, no matter where you live, has disrupted many plans and required flexibility and rethinking in many areas. Here at Offenburg University, too, everything was different than usual. Unfortunately, the Alumni Event, which should have taken place during the International Festival of the City of Offenburg, was cancelled too. The family-like atmosphere and the social interaction that is characteristic of the Graduate School and which international students at Offenburg appreciate was abruptly interrupted. Despite the restrictions, studies and services continued largely uninterrupted, thanks to the creativity, adaptability and hard work of both staff and students.

We are now pleased to be able to give you a small insight into the year 2020 at Offenburg University and are happy to share with you some impressions from the life of fellow alumni too.

Wishing you a joyful and peaceful Christmas season and health, happiness and success for the year 2021.

The Graduate School Team

Top rating for Corona Management



In a national survey in September 2020, students rated the Corona Management of Offenburg University up to 24 percentage points better than the national average in Germany.

More than 92 percent of the Offenburg students rated the "handling of the pandemic by the university overall" as very good or good in the inquiries of the Center for University Development

(CHE). The fact that this is an outstanding value is shown in comparison with the nationwide average values, which are at 83 percent. The "opportunities for digital professional exchange among students" in particular rated significantly higher than the national average. They were rated 24 percentage points better. This was followed by the categories "Teaching concept of the teaching staff especially for digital courses" (22 percentage points above average), "Transparency of requirements and performance targets" (15 percentage points above average), "Accessibility of contact persons" and "Enabling students to continue and complete their studies as planned" (each 12 percent above average).

"We are pleased that the excellent teamwork of all university members in the areas of study and teaching as well as administration has found this above-average recognition among our students," commented Offenburg's university rector Prof. Dr. Winfried Lieber on the externally confirmed top result, "this also acknowledges the many additional services provided by colleagues in the various areas in the past weeks and months."

Graduate School goes online



At the Graduate School, courses have successfully switched to digital teaching in April 2020, with on-campus teaching only taking place in exceptional cases. Students can also pursue their studies online until they arrive in Offenburg. The coordinators of each program are available as well for single consultations at selected times in their offices as well as via email, phone or video sessions via

Zoom. Services such as the introduction weekend, the cultural program or the personal contact with members of the Senior Service can only take place in limited dimensions.

It was nevertheless still possible to have an introductory event for the new Graduate School students in October and, in small groups, a vineyard hike and city tours led by members of the Senior Service, all in accordance with hygiene regulations. Other events, such as the Christmas Get-Together, the Word-Café and the Graduation Ceremony were transferred to online events.

For example, instead of the Christmas get-together in Gengenbach, gift bags were distributed to the international students. The bags were filled with home-made cookies, baked by members of the Senior Service, nuts, mandarins, a chocolate Santa Claus, tea and lyrics of German Christmas carols. The treats were then enjoyed during two virtual St. Nicholas celebrations. An introductory game, a quiz and the joint singing of the Christmas carols provided the appropriate entertainment.

MPE alumnus produces COVID-19 vaccine candidate



In 2020, Dr. Pavel Marichal-Gallardo, alumnus of the Master's degree program Process Engineering, developed technologies and processes for Covid-19 vaccine candidates. With ContiVir, a spin-off project at the Max Planck Institute for Dynamics of Complex Technical Systems Magdeburg, he even produced a non-infectious candidate based on virus-like-particles (VLPs) that resemble the external structure of SARS-CoV-2.

"We are very happy about the great progress that several vaccines have shown and are excited about their imminent rollout to the general population", he explains, "but we are still very much concerned about the vaccine supply for poor and developing countries given the limited and centralized manufacturing capacity worldwide, which is the problem we are trying to solve."

"Just a few days ago", he reports "we received the good news about extra funding for at least € 500 000 (still to be negotiated) for validating and manufacturing our devices for clinical use. Hopefully, this will allow our potential customers to efficiently produce clinical-grade material for use in humans, bringing us closer to our vision of miniaturized, simplified, and de-centralized virus production for vaccines and gene therapies so that no patient is ever told that a treatment is not readily available.

Regarding the current pandemic, it has been a very tough year in many ways but I believe we have a moral responsibility to continue working on this in every capacity available to us despite the more advanced progress shown by others. It's clear that everything achieved so far has been thanks to a wonderful combination of efforts from academia, industry, and government. Every citizen also carries a great responsibility to be prudent, patient, and to remain informed and updated with reliable information from experts and serious sources."

IFTI inspires with Global Symposium 2020



In September, more than 135 participants from all over the world attended an international conference organized by the Institute for Trade and Innovation (IFTI) at Offenburg University, which was organized in an innovative hybrid format. The 38 high-ranking speakers and the audience at the IFTI Global Symposium under the motto "Business Development in a World of Change" took part in a

hybrid event on Gengenbach campus as

well as online. "We are proud of the enthusiastic feedback from the participants from more than 25 countries," said IFTI Director Professor Andreas Klasen, delighted with the great success of the hybrid format.

The core topics of the two-day conference were the management of key challenges in the areas of innovation, trade and economic development in times of corona and global political uncertainty. In addition, the international guests discussed the convergence of development and trade finance as well as the topic of infrastructure finance in Africa. Following the individual presentations and roundtable discussions, there was always the opportunity to ask the experts questions. The numerous listeners, both on-site and online, made active use of this opportunity.

New Director of the International Center



In December 2020, Dr. Alexander Burdumy joined the Offenburg University as Director of the International Center. Before coming to Offenburg, he has worked at higher education institutions in London, Birmingham, Colchester and Durham.

At Offenburg he will bring new impulses and ideas to the International Center and support the university in its mission

statement and its internationalization strategy.

When asked about his first impressions he replies: "Offenburg University is a very friendly, active and welcoming place in a beautiful landscape setting in Germany. I hope that in the future more people will be able to contribute and benefit from the cluster of excellence in research and teaching that is located at Offenburg University."

Franz Roser Receives Medal of Honor of the University



After four years, Offenburg University has awarded a medal of honor for the first time again. It was awarded to Franz Roser, who has been managing and developing the Senior Service since 2010.

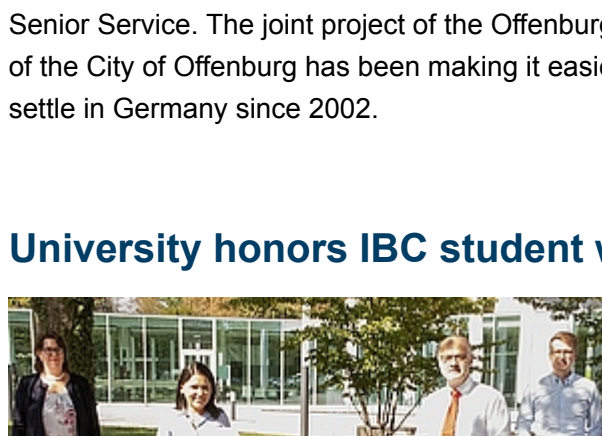
"A medal of honor can be awarded to personalities who have rendered outstanding services to the university for their longstanding and selfless commitment. And you meet these criteria

completely," explained Rector Prof. Dr. Winfried Lieber in his laudation. "The fact that the Senior Service has developed so well over the past ten years is very much due to your personality and engagement. Since the university brings together students with very different cultural backgrounds, a great deal of empathy, helpfulness and open-mindedness is required." In addition, "Franz Roser has recruited many new members for the Senior Service in recent years and the cooperation with the university could not be better," added Lydia Schindler, contact person for the Senior Service at Offenburg University.

"I am delighted to be awarded the Medal of Honor and accept it on behalf of the entire Senior Service, because we are a great team in which many friendships have already been formed." thanked Franz Roser and promised with a smile: "But that doesn't mean that I will stop right now."

Most recently, around 80 seniors were active in the annually recurring activities of the Senior Service. The joint project of the Offenburg University and the City of Offenburg has been making it easier for international students to arrive and settle in Germany since 2002.

University honors IBC student with DAAD award



In a small ceremony at Offenburg University, IBC student Elsa Nohemy Landaverde Tejada received the 2020/21 award granted by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD).

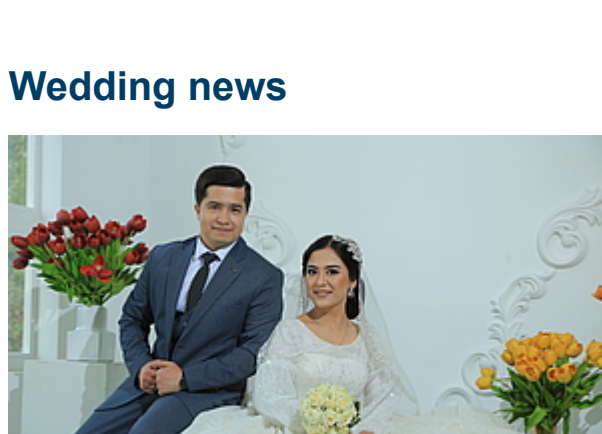
"With your academic achievements, but also with your social, societal and university-internal commitment, you are leaving a valuable mark on us," said Professor Anne Najderek and presented

the El Salvadorian with the award certificate. "You have demonstrated the intention of the prize, especially in Corona times, with your commitment to cohesion among your fellow students,"

Rector Lieber also congratulated the prize winner. "Especially in times of renationalization and protectionism, foreign students play a crucial role in contributing to understanding and cooperation on a global level," said Rector Prof. Dr. Winfried Lieber.

"It is an honor for me to accept the award at Offenburg University of Applied Sciences. I owe this success above all to my family. I feel even more obliged to contribute to solving social problems", explained Elsa Nohemy Landaverde Tejada and added: "Education has the power to change lives positively".

Wedding news



Herewith we send our wedding congratulations to Askarjon Isroilov, alumnus of the Master's degree program Communication and Media Engineering, who is currently working as a Junior Software Developer in POET GmbH in Karlsruhe, Germany. We wish him and his wife all the best for their life together. May their partnership always give them joy and strength, no matter where this

common path may lead them.

Along with a picture from his wedding he sends the following message to all you: "I found my second half, lifelong love. We wish everyone that they find their second half and live happily. God bless you all."

Thank you for being part of the Graduate School's international alumni network.

If you want to keep in contact with us and with your fellow alumni, visit our Alumni Portal:

<https://www.hs-offenburg.de/alumni-portal-gs>