

limes international



The semester magazine for international partners, students, and parents No. 18, March 2017

- Themes: Alumnus, Alumna, Alumni - after graduation it is only just the beginning!
- Aalen University is the first Fairtrade University in Baden Württemberg
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Dear limes international Readers,

At this year's graduation ceremony we said goodbye to over 600 graduates. With the degree in their pockets the alumni have many opportunities. They are now setting the right course for their individual careers and lives. But even if our paths are separated for now, it is important for the graduates to never completely lose contact with one another or their university. Our former students are also very important to us as a university - especially since the alumni contribute significantly to the reputation and image of the university. They are our most important ambassadors both nationally and internationally. With our university alumni work we want to permanently strengthen our contact with our former students, integrate them firmly into the university community, and thus form a strong network of active and former university members.

We will further expand our offers, initiatives, and networks in the framework of alumni work. You can read in this issue of the Limes magazine that our alumni have good connections to their university and we remain in close contact with them.

Enjoy reading

Your



Prof. Dr. Gerhard Schneider
Rector of Aalen University





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Alumnus, Alumna, Alumni - after graduation it is only just the beginning!

More and more organizations, educational institutions, and even companies in the free economy in Germany have been infected with "alumni fever" in the recent years and decades. Its origin can be found in pre-medieval Europe. At that time, however, the word "alumni" still had a very different meaning from what it is today.

If you turn the clock of world history back to the hour of the Roman empire, the term "alumni" was used to describe not only pupils, but also foster children (lat. Alumna = Eng. foster daughter, lat. Alumnus = Eng. foster son) who required special care. Also the Roman soldiers, who were injured or veterans, and were supposed to be brought back to health by intensive care, support, and free food, were called alumni. Conclusions can also be drawn about the meaning of the word when you examine medieval Europe after the fall of the Roman Empire.

According to the motto "Provided with food and drink, and taught in all good manners," monastic schools and educational institutions (lat. Alumnat) offered their pupils not only access to knowledge and education through teaching and god-fearing education - they also supplied them with food, clothing, and accommodation. For the pupils often came from the poorer sections of the population. These examples show that the term "alumni" has constantly changed in the course of history: it initially always had a connotation of necessity and poverty; the term was later increasingly used to describe the members of universities and higher education institutions.

Nowadays many universities can look back on a centuries-old tradition of alumni. Since the 18th century graduates have joined forces to form associations, connections, and clubs in order to keep in touch with each other and with the university. The prestigious universities in the English and Anglo-American countries maintain a close lifelong contact with the alumni after graduation. At these universities it is considered honorable for the alumni to get involved in the alumni network, as well as to support the university on material and immaterial paths. This lively alumni culture is a desirable example for many German universities and colleges. Even if the history of Aalen University does not go quite as far into the past as the history of many old universities in the USA or Great Britain, the importance of maintaining contact with the alumni has grown enormously in recent years. The graduates as well as the former students of Aalen University are an important group within the university community. Alumni do not only serve as credible and authentic ambassadors of the university, but also provide an invaluable source of experience and information for current students.

In the form of practical lectures, workshops or discussion sessions, students can get a real impression of the professional career of the graduates and collect indispensable information for their own career planning.

Aalen University provides students with new opportunities and perspectives on their way to the professional world. The mentoring offers where former students of Aalen University are mentors are particularly effective and impressive. Through their insight into the current requirements and concerns of the professional world, alumni can make a significant contribution to strengthening and further improving teaching and practical education at the university. Not infrequently, appealing internships, topics for study, and dissertation work or even job offers and direct entries are conveyed after the course. Alumni can also benefit from a close relationship with the "old" university. According to the motto "Once an Aalener - always an Aalener!", there is, of course, the possibility for every Alumna and Alumnus to turn to his / her university at both the professional and the private level:

Whether you are interested in current topics at the university or in the degree programs you want to listen to a specialist lecture in the frame of the General Studies, you need help organizing a class meeting, or would like to work on a company project in cooperation with professors and students - Alumni are an important part of the university family and, like the active university students, are supported with all available forces.

The establishment of a sustainable and lively network in which active and former members of the university of different generations, career levels, and disciplines are united is a matter of great importance to Aalen University.

A lot has already been achieved in the past years in the schools and study departments in order to build up a strong community for the future. Building on this solid foundation, Aalen

University has set itself the goal of expanding the alumni work in the coming years, both at the level of the degree programs and , as well as across the entire university. A comprehensive network is to be created with the combined efforts of the central institutions, and degree programs, as well as the support of the alumni. This is intended to connect students, employees, professors, friends and sponsors, emeriti and alumni, even more closely in the future. After all, after graduation it is only just the beginning!

■ Christian Kling
Communication/Alumni-Management

Focus

For more information and news about the offers, initiatives and networks within the framework of alumni management, please visit: www.hs-aalen.de/alumni

Aalen University is the first Fairtrade University in Baden Württemberg

Aalen University has received the "Fairtrade University" certificate for its commitment to fair trade. This distinguishes Aalen University not only as the first Fairtrade University of Baden-Württemberg; but also as the first Fairtrade University of Applied Sciences in Germany to be awarded the seal of approval by TransFair. In order to receive the title of "Fairtrade University," universities must meet a variety of criteria, including a rectorate's resolution to the topic, Fairtrade events, and offer Fairtrade products at meetings, public events, and in campus catering. For example, fair trade coffee has been served for two years in the main cafeteria and the two other cafeterias at the university. Prof. Dr. Ulrich Holzbaur, Senate's delegate for sustainable development, underlined the great commitment of the students, who had laid the foundation for

the application as "Fairtrade University" and helped to promote the necessary certification in the course of their project work. The professor for industrial management stressed the strong practical relevance of the studies: "At the end, we do not have a Power Point presentation but an award for being a Fairtrade University. Our students are changing something."

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Very pleased about the high honor

Study place of excellence

Aalen University is a study place of excellence. At the first national agenda conference »Education for Sustainable Development« in Berlin, the Federal Minister for Education and Research, Prof. Dr. Johanna Wanka, and the President of the [German Commission for UNESCO](#), Prof. Dr. Verena Metze, honored the university's commitment to sustainability in teaching and research. In total, 65 municipalities, places of learning, and networks in Germany were awarded as good examples of education for sustainable development (ESD). Aalen University was the only university of applied sciences that received the award, along with two other universities. The sustainability experts, Ariane Kropp and Daniela Dorrer, as well as the Senate's delegate for sustainable development Prof. Dr. Ulrich Holzbaur, accepted the award for the university.

A decisive factor for the award was the systematic foundation of sustainable development in the structure and education plan of Aalen University. The cooperation with city administration and the local Agenda 21 in the "Reallabor Aalen" plays a special role.

Here, students work together with regional stakeholders to develop projects and specific sustainability aspects such as the environment, ecology, accessibility, responsible entrepreneurship, and prevention. The student projects were implemented, evaluated, and systematized, especially in the department of industrial management. In the General Studies program, sustainable development is also conveyed to students of all schools through the "Sustainability in practical terms" program and the lecture series, "Sustainable Development".

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Daniela Dorrer, Prof. Dr. Ulrich Holzbaur und Ariane Kropp

Research update



Go in depth with the research master's program

The three-semester research master program "Advanced Materials and Manufacturing" (AMM) at Aalen University is an innovative and appealing master program, as it is only offered at very few universities in Germany. The program's distinctive feature: in contrast to the classic »Taught Master«, the focus is on applied research. From the very beginning, the AMM students are independently working on current research topics in the fields of materials and manufacturing technology, as well as design and testing. This is done in an intensive exchange with their supervising professor and their research group, with modern and high-quality labs

available. The study program was conceived five years ago by several university professors, and quickly developed into a strong program within the school of Mechanical Engineering and Materials Science. "The high quality of work and the growing interdisciplinary nature of the studies are particularly pleasing, so that meanwhile colleagues, and their research groups from other schools, are also active in the degree programs," stresses Prof. Dr. Volker Knoblauch.

The research master students appreciate this, like Simon Ruck, who finished his studies at the end of 2015. "The AMM Master is awesome. It offers the possibility of dealing with a topic over a longer period than normally usual, not only in theory, but also in self-employed practical work," says the 27-year-old. Valentina Reitz finished her master's degree at the Institute for Materials Research in June 2016 and is more than satisfied with the course selection: "For me it was a good preparation for my current job as a development engineer. I had to work independently and in a structured way and the project was my own responsibility."

Numerous research projects are involved in national and international cooperations with well-known universities and companies. In this way, the students gain early insights into industrial research and development work and learn to work in interdisciplinary teams. Simon Ruck remembers: "For my research topic, laser processing of diamond tools, I always had close contact with the company Mapal, which gave me industrial tasks, and the company Trumpf, where I could always try out a wide variety of lasers."

By combining this close collaboration with industry and the state-of-the-art analytical labs at the university, the AMM Master is a great opportunity to work on research topics." Valentina Reitz also sees this as a great advantage. "The close cooperation with different disciplines in industry and university strengthens the ability to work in a team, and the experts are always available with advice and help", says the student.

The accompanying lectures in the fields of materials science, manufacturing technology, and product development provide a deepened theoretical know-how in the field of research. The thesis concludes the three-semester research project; thus an ideal preparation for demanding tasks in the industrial research and advance development or for subsequent PhD studies. "We can recommend this course of study to everyone who wishes to receive more than just theoretical knowledge from their studies" both, Valentina Reitz and Simon Ruck, agree on.

- Karin Kimmel/Prof. Dr. Volker Knoblauch
Institute for Materials Research IMFAA

Institute for Materials Research IMFAA

In the research master's program "Advanced Materials and Manufacturing" (AMM) the focus of studies is on the applied research.

Aalen meets Lindau

At the [66th conference of Nobel Prize winners in Lindau](#), Prof. Dr. Andreas Heinrich and Ph.D. student Manuel Rank presented current research work from the Center for Optical Technologies (COT). Every year, the State of Baden-Württemberg invites excellent and young researchers to take part in a boat trip on the Lake Constance. Leading research institutions have the opportunity to present themselves and their findings. In the previous years, Prof. Dr. Herbert Schneckenburger and Prof. Dr. Dagmar Goll attended this event in Lindau. This year, COT took part and its presentation attracted keen interest. Even Dr. Simone Schwanitz, then the Deputy Minister of Science, Research and the Arts of Baden-Wuerttemberg, informed herself about additively made optics from Aalen.



Prof. Dr. Andreas Heinrich, Dr. Simone Schwanitz and Manuel Rank (from the left) at the 66th conference of Nobel Prize winners.

Research abroad

In the sabbatical, professors are released from their teaching obligations in order to devote themselves entirely to research. In the last winter semester, Prof. Dr. Volker Knoblauch took sabbatical from the AMM study program. A stay of several weeks at the University of California Santa Barbara (UCSB) served the intensive exchange of information about battery and lightweight construction materials. An important colleague was Prof. Robert McMeeking, with whom Prof. Dr. Knoblauch had already worked at Robert Bosch GmbH in his previous industrial activities. In addition to the elaboration of new ideas, their implementations were also pushed forward. Several research proposals have been successfully implemented with his work group at the Institute for Material Research. This includes the innovative HE-LIB project to improve the performance of electrodes for lithium-ion batteries, as well as the BMWi-funded KersoLife100 project about full-ceramic high-temperature fuel cells for small cogeneration units which is performed with Robert Bosch GmbH, the KIT and the research center Jülich.



Beautiful research environment at the UCSB.

From Aalen to the Middle Kingdom

Michael Egner studied International Business Administration at Aalen University from 2000 to 2005. His internship semesters in China and Mexico have shaped his professional future: Michael Egner has been working in China for almost eight years now. The 40-year-old remains faithful to the university despite the distance of some 8,000 kilometers - whether as an intermediary for internships for students or as a lecturer and China expert at the "China Days" organized by the International Relations Office.

Limes: Why did you study in Aalen?

ME: I originally come from Aalen, and at that time the degree program, International Business Administration, was relatively new. The international focus particularly appealed to me.

Limes: What knowledge from your years of study has shaped you?

ME: That, as a graduate of an international business study program, you become a generalist – and that's quite alright too.

Limes: Where did you prefer to study and celebrate in Aalen?

ME: I studied quite relaxed at a desk, and I celebrated at the legendary university parties!

Limes: What were important checkpoints on your career path?

ME: The practical semesters were, of course, a highlight. I was especially impressed by the experience of being one of the first to participate in the Shenyang University program. The internship semester itself took place at a Chinese state enterprise - very interesting at that time. It was during this time that I first got in contact with Continental AG, with whom I then did the second practical semester in Mexico. After studying, I worked as a product manager at Benecke-Kaliko AG, which develops and manufactures plastic surface materials. I worked in the business development & marketing department, and worked as a key account manager in Detroit, USA before taking over responsibility for China as general manager for Benecke-Changshun. This was followed by a move to the senior executive management of Continental AG as the plant manager of the tire plant in Hefei, also in China. And what is still to come, we'll see... It is important that the profession is fun, challenges you, and that you are also satisfied when you look back.

Limes: Do you still have a relationship with Aalen University?

ME: In the last years I have participated in the "China Day" organized by the International Relations Office, an excellent opportunity to learn about China. And for me personally it is a great opportunity to meet former students, who have done an internship semester in China with me over the years.

Limes: What advice would you give to current students?

ME: You have to enjoy your time as a student; you will never have an opportunity like this again. Use the internship semester to get an insight into

different companies and other countries and cultures - which also becomes more difficult later. Last but not least, you should not put too much pressure on time. If it takes half a year longer, it is not the end of the world. When it comes to the job search, you should look for something that really interests you. Only then is your motivation high enough to hang on for the long term.

Limes: What is a pity about not being a student anymore?

ME: My calendar is normally fixed over three, four months - vacations are quite rare. This was different as a student.

■ Martina Kübler
International Relations Office



Michael Egner, IBW 2005



International

Foreign exchange students are important ambassadors

The recently published university strategy Ostalbkreis 2030 confirmed: Global networking is one of the relevant trends in academic education and research. Universities must be appealing to German and foreign students, and scientists. This also includes promoting the international competences of their students and preparing students for the challenges of growing globalization. Combined with the sword of Damocles of the demographic change, which makes it possible to forecast a shortage of skilled workers in the region, Aalen University will once again intensify its internationalization in the coming years. The study on the university strategy Ostalbkreis 2030 makes it

clear that rural regions will be particularly affected by the decline in student numbers. Looking at the development of the 18 to 23-year-olds in the region, the group of potential students, a decline of 20% is expected by 2030. The study shows, "this can lead to a significant drop in student numbers for the universities in the region, unless all last efforts are made to show how attractive it is to study in the region. If you look at the PROGNOS study on the demographic change in Germany from 2009, it is also clear that the labor force demand will strongly exceed the number of employees by the end of the prognosis period 2030. In engineering, the shortage of specialists and executives will rise to over 30%.

According to PROGROS, the demographic change will also lead to a reduction in the number of inhabitants by around 4.1 million by 2030. The shortage of labor will be between 4.2 and 5.2 million workers, depending on the scenario. Of particular importance, is the message that approximately 2.4 million graduates will be missing from the labor market by 2030, and thus up to 30% of the workforce for high-quality jobs. What can be done to counter this development? Scientists and experts agree that, in particular, immigration is a starting point in this context. Transferred to higher education it means nothing more than the fact that in the future more students from abroad will have to be recruited.

Given the current challenges, this idea may not be of paramount importance for everyone, but this may already be necessary in the near future. That is why it is crucial to encourage anticyclical thinking today, in order to set the proper course for the future - not only when the emergency has already occurred, and the cake of the international education market has already been distributed.

For the university and research landscape Ostalbkreis 2030, the strategy paper for the area of teaching was formulated in such a way that the appeal for students from abroad must be increased. For this purpose, innovative concepts are also needed in order to become even more visible abroad.

First concepts are already being developed and implemented in ongoing projects or are being planned.

At Aalen University for example, a successful university-based company program has been set up. This, in cooperation with companies, includes the acquisition of foreign students for study and an internship in Germany, to achieve an early binding of "high potentials" to the respective company.

In fact, the expert interviews on the university strategy Ostalbkreis 2030 also showed that maintaining a continuing relationship with alumni in the region can only be achieved through intensive cooperation between the universities and the regional companies. This applies, of course, not only to the German alumni, but also to the foreign alumni of the universities in the region.

At this juncture, too, roots must be planted within the regional economy through practical examinations, internships, dissertation work, or job offers in order to make the transition from study to profession seamless and to challenge the future lack of specialists.

»TOP - Talents Ostwürttemberg Plus«

The BWS plus project "TOP" (Talents Ostwürttemberg Plus) is another example. It was initiated by the International Relations Offices of the four state universities of East Württemberg, Aalen University, DHBW Heidenheim, HfG Schwäbisch Gmünd and PH Schwäbisch Gmünd. The goal: to be regarded as an appealing university region with a strong identity, good job opportunities, a charming intercultural climate, and a strongly developed welcoming culture. "TOP" uses the Baden-Württemberg scholarship as a premium instrument to achieve its goals. Each of the four partner universities in the eastern part of Stuttgart concentrates on intensifying existing and new partnerships as part of the BWS plus project.

The International Relations Offices of the universities of the region actually have been cooperating in various ways for several years. They have already achieved significant growth of their cooperation beyond the level of teaching, within the framework of the three-year project MOSTKIND (Mentoring East-Württemberg - Cooperative Integration of Non-German Students) funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research. MOSTKIND is an overall regional concept for promoting the professional, linguistic, social, and cultural integration of foreign students and students with a migration background. Under the umbrella of MOSTKIND, support and integration programs of the International Relations Offices were networked, expanded and partly reestablished. Only recently, MOSTKIND has found a corresponding recognition by being mentioned on the website of the Federal Government www.deutschland-kann-das.de. The aim of this site is to identify projects which serve the integration of refugees, which MOSTKIND actually does with its online integration portal to support foreign students in the integration into the society, and with the enabling of a fast entry into the working world for graduates.

International Club East Württemberg

Finally, already last autumn, the International Relations Offices of the East Württemberg universities were admitted to the International Club East-Württemberg for "Inpats" (the opposite of "Expats"), founded by the East Württemberg Chamber of Industry and Commerce and various companies of the region (<http://www.ic-eastwuerttemberg.de>), in which foreign employees of companies, and now also foreign students, of the region are offered activities to get to know the region East Württemberg. For the students, this means an additional possibility for integration, as well as an early networking opportunity with company representatives. Michaela Eberle, the new managing director of the East Württemberg Chamber of Industry and Commerce, confirmed that this cooperation is a good way to present the

location of East Württemberg to the international students and the appeal of the region: "The students are thus not only ambassadors at their home universities and places, but are also given incentives to return to East Württemberg as employees."

■ Pascal Cromm
Director International Relations

We are blown away... from the USA to Aalen

Hi,

My name is Bobbi Scherman. I am from Pennsylvania, a state in the east of the United States of America. But I was born in New York City, where I spent the first years of my life. At that time, my mother worked as a computer specialist at the World Trade Center. We were really lucky that she was not in the office on September 11th 2001! After the terrible terrorist attack on the Twin Towers, my mother decided to move to a safer place with my three brothers and myself. So we moved out to the country, to Pennsylvania - with the nearest supermarket 30 minutes away. That was quite a change.

After the high school I studied at East Stroudsburg University (ESU), Pennsylvania, and completed my Bachelor's degree there. When I heard about the possibility of studying here in Aalen at our partner university, I didn't think about it too long. The qualifications of German universities are highly regarded internationally. And there is no study fee! Besides, it is my great passion to travel and to get to know other cultures. I don't like it when you get too comfortable in one place for too long.

I find, in a strange environment, you grow as a person and you learn a lot. You definitely become more independent. I have also already spent a semester in China.



Bobbi Scherman

USA

Language: English

Capital: Washington, D.C.

Constitution: Federal Republic

Area: 9.857.306 km²

Number of inhabitants: 322.262.226 (2015)

Sights: Empire State Building, Grand Canyon, Golden Gate Bridge, Yellowstone National Park, Mount Rushmore National Memorial



I have been living in Aalen since August, and I am doing my Master's degree in International Marketing and Sales at Aalen University. I thought the campus tour was great. This was a great opportunity to make new contacts right away. I also like Aalen very much – it's a nice little town. The cobblestone pavement is so classic! Like in a movie!

In the meantime, I have also been out and have gone to parties. When the Germans celebrate, it is rarely wild. Nobody ever does anything crazy. At home people celebrate pretty hard. Here everyone is so reasonable. I also noticed this by your attention to waste separation. But I think it's good to do something for the environment. It's just great to dive into a strange world. Eventually I would like to be the director of an International Relations Office, to enable other students to discover other cultures as well.

*Take care!
Bobbi Scherman*

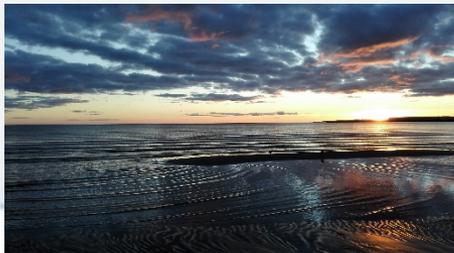


We are blown away... from Aalen to Sweden

Hej hej,

Fascinating, how quickly the internship semester passed by, and how I like to look back on the time that has passed. Half a year I was in Halmstad in Sweden. This small town with around 60,000 inhabitants is located in the south of Sweden, between Malmö and Gothenburg, directly on the sea! Prior to my studies, I did an apprenticeship as an electronics technician and then started studying optoelectronics and laser technology. I have always liked the idea of going abroad, improving my English skills, and getting to know other people and cultures. I also wanted to familiarize myself with another work environment. The internship semester was a great opportunity for this!

Aalen University is in close contact with the University of Halmstad, so I was able to collect a lot of information in a short period of time, and to get in touch with my supervisor in advance. All formal things, including the Erasmus scholarship, then went relatively quickly. The department at the University of Halmstad, where I worked, focuses on research topics and on the processing and measurement of painted surfaces.



Timo Ebert

Sweden

Language: Swedish

Capital: Stockholm

State form: Parliamentary hereditary monarchy

Area: 447,435 km²

Number of inhabitants: 9.875.378 (2016)

Attractions:

Vasa Museum,
Drottningholm Castle,
Open-Air Museum
Skansen, Astrid
Lindgren 's Värld,
Rock carvings of
Tanum, Glimmingehus



My main project was the quality control of painted car parts.

I lived in a small bungalow just behind the beach with other students from Aalen. We enjoyed the long days of the summer semester with grilling, fishing, parties, and just hanging out. One of our highlights was »Midsommar« and it really is true, at night it almost doesn't get dark anymore!

Also my passion for traveling did not suffer.. One of my highlights was visiting the capital, Stockholm, which is one of the most beautiful cities I have seen so far. Gothenburg, Lund, Kalmar and Jönköping are just a few more cities that I visited. My internship was a great success and a unique experience. I would encourage everyone to pursue this experience as well. I just don't want to miss this time and I would gladly do it again, and I wouldn't change a thing.

Hej då!
Timo Ebert



Foreign students integrated

The non-profit organisation International Society Aalen e. V. at Aalen University (ISA) has a reason to celebrate. The association that was founded by students, employees, and professors to promote the integration of foreign students and the internationalization of the university has been operating for 15 years now.

At this year's Annual General Meeting, Rector and Chairman of the Board, Prof. Dr. Dr. Herbert Hering, drew up a balance sheet to conclude his fifth term of office. Around 1,000 foreign students have received help in finding a suitable accommodation. Numerous scholarships and emergency aid benefited foreign students – and last but not least is the successful "Buddy Program". Here, German students assist fellow foreign students over a period of one to two semesters, and help to get along in the new study environment and everyday life.

Now a new era begins at ISA e.V.



Pascal Cromm, Prof. Dr. Dr. Ekbert Hering, Prof. Dr. Ulrich Klauck, Antje Discher, Prof. Dr. Dirk Flottmann, from left to right

The previous chairman Hering passed the baton to Prof. Dr. Ulrich Klauck. New Deputy Chairman is now Prof. Dr. Dirk Flottmann. Pascal Cromm acts as treasurer and Antje Discher as recording clerk. The cash auditors are Professors Dr. Jürgen Strauss and Dr. Ralf Härting.

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Contributing Authors:

Christian Kling, Saskia Stüven-Kazi
(ssk), Karin Kimmel / Prof. Dr.
Volker Knoblauch, Martina Kübler,
Pascal Cromm, Bobbi Scherman,
Timo Ebert

Photographs:

By Aalen University

In the next issue:

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- International News
- Research News
- and much more ...

Questions? Comments? Write to:

International Center
Aalen University
Beethoven Street 135
73430 Aalen
Germany

Tel: +49 (0) 7361 576 – 1701
Fax: +49 (0) 7361 576 – 1709
Email: aaa@hs-aalen.de

Translated from the original German by
Nicola Dirks, Student Worker and Raechel
White, Tutor at the International Center,
Aalen University