

MINUTES FOR THE AWARENESS GROUP MEETINGS

Having been awarded the Austrian Federal Ministry of Research and Education’s “Diversitas” prize in 2018 for its project “Unframing Diversity”, we at the University of Applied Arts ask ourselves what diversity means in our work. We ask ourselves what we can apply, how we can apply it, or how we can improve it.

WHAT WE HAVE ACCOMPLISHED SO FAR?

In our department structurally:

- Admission procedure for students: team, guests, integration of the students, voting process: every vote counts
- Admission procedure core team: a committee consisting of upper- and midlevel faculty and student council members
- Conversion of the entire curriculum: from required to elective subjects, incl. incorporation into a “suitable curriculum” (fine arts and media arts)
- Selection and conception of an adequate site with architecture. The premise was that our work space is part of the curriculum. Studios, workshops, exhibition space, and outdoor space are connected as well as available and accessible 24/7
- Creation of a new position responsible for project organization
- Instructors are present the whole week
- Individual teacher-student consultations
- Class speaker: establishment of a contact person within the institution hierarchy, who would serve as a trusted contact point for both sides
- The team moderates the allocation of studios: access to all students based on the principle of nomination and need

At the university:

- A manual of non-discriminatory and gender-sensitive language (and more) is being drawn up by the vice-rector in charge of gender and diversity affairs in coordination with the ÖH (Austrian Student Union) and should be available to us (team and students) and serve as our code of practice
- Gender and diversity officer of the university as a guest to our department. Discussion with team and students
- Participation of midlevel faculty representatives in meetings at the University of Applied Arts to discuss/implement in-house diversity measures
- Discussion: free tampons in the restrooms: an initiative (Gabi Edlbauer and assistants) for making free personal hygiene articles available to people who would normally have to pay for them
- Ongoing evaluation: representation of upper- and midlevel faculty at the institute and in the senate?
- Ongoing evaluation: representation of students in the HUFAC (Student Union of the University of Applied Arts) and at the institute and in the senate?
- Offer to improve visibility at the University of Applied Arts: Department of Gender Affairs: Gender Monitoring, lecture series Art – Research – Gender, gender studies art...

In the curriculum (since 2015):

- Main Artistic Subject (MAS): Not a theme for the whole year! The team tries to help students explore their interests. Many parallel themes/processes in the department: students, PhD, guest, Erasmus, PEEK, and FWF
- Workshop supervision in the department: W/M 50%
- The dialogue group: through participation in the dialogue group, students can shape talking time/discussion about art. The instructors do not determine/dominate the discussion through more knowledge or their position.
- MAS: theme “Save Space”: artistic work often pushes us to the edge --> challenging and emotional discussions about existence, identity, language, origin, emotion, gender
- MAS: guests must introduce themselves to the whole class – in this way, we create a connection
- Visiting professorship to increase visibility of teamwork
- MAS: introduce discussion structure/culture: preparatory discussions with the team, presentation within the group, individual discussions student/assistant/professor
- MAS: possibility for presentation and feedback in the following week

New: “Diversity Working Group” (working title)

In several meetings with students (Tsai, Rosa, Sissi, and Andreas), a midlevel faculty representative (Johanna), and upper-level faculty representative (Paul) we have come up with a structure for a working group. Along with all our tasks, this Group can/should enable a dialogue and have an open format. It can discuss/implement concrete goals (e.g. restroom signs) but also simply invite guests, conduct research, and much more. Johanna and Paul expect that one or more students will want to assume these tasks as “a job” and take the responsibility of leading this Group. For now, we have outlined the following points:

- Student-speakers are the class speakers
- Students are additionally represented by 2 students in the class
- Students are in contact with a FLINTA* Group, which Sissi wanted to found in summer semester 2021
- Budget: € 1,000 (pay for students for research, organizational work, project budget)
- Name of the working group was discussed: Staying in Dialogue*? Subtitle: Gemeinsame Sprache(n)/Shared Language(s)?
- Regular meetings (max. 1 x per semester together with Paul and Johanna)
- Themes: nothing specific, ideas can circulate... at the moment, for example, the theme of “barrier-free studying” has been called to our attention
- Short- and long-term goals are: to be discussed?

*Without previously consulting with Johanna Tinzl we have borrowed the title of her course © “Staying in Dialogue – Making Collaboration” for this document.

MEETING ON 9 DECEMBER 2021

Participants: Camille Borchert, Andreas Budak, Niña Lerch, Maria Stepanek, Paul Petritsch, Johanna Tinzl, Ida Zahradnik, Ella Zwatz

Topics of discussion:

- Johanna, Paul, and Andreas give a brief summary of what has been accomplished to date
- Issue of tampon financing must be discussed with the class to ensure transparency
- Camille proposes the name “Awareness Group” (doesn’t think diversity is completely applicable)

A vote results in 8 yeas/0 nays. We will use the name “Awareness Group” effective immediately

- We decide: The Awareness Group will take the minutes/write down the results of the meeting and make them available to everyone at www.ortsbezogenekunst.at/intern. In this way, everyone can participate and stay informed. Paul will take the minutes of the current meeting and give the document to Heribert to post online
- We plan 19 May 2022, as a possible half day (3 hours) summer semester slot for a workshop. Proposals should be submitted by the participants by 20 January 2022. Thursday seems practical because students, instructors, and administrators are present at Paulusplatz. Everyone who wants to, can participate.
- In the fall, at the beginning of the semester, the team can arrange a new workshop date.
- For studio planning purposes, Ella would like to know by the end of June how many firsties will be coming, so that they can be spread out/integrated better. This is feasible
- Budget of the Awareness Group: point of departure € 1,000/year. Paul/Maria will plan an ongoing budget
- The fundamental structuring of the budget will be needed soon. To this end, Paul/Maria will need a budget plan: e.g. € 500 for research and € 500 for lectures/workshop. The Awareness Group is responsible for planning within the budget limits.
- Niña wants to research barrier-free studying and present her findings to the Awareness Group. Everyone agrees to this: The University of Vienna already has experience. For now, we set a budget of € 12/hour capped at a max. of € 150.
- Paul asks Andreas in an e-mail to moderate the next meeting and take the minutes.

Plans for Next Meeting:

- Thursday, 20 January 2022, 9-10 a.m.
- Minutes: Andreas Budak
- Topics: concrete proposals, budget, keeping a record of the meetings: how detailed should these minutes be?