

## ConRuhr Newsletter

**May 2006**

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### Directors Corner

Welcome to **RuhrFan**, the Ruhr Friends and Alumni Network and thank you for interest. RuhrFans is an initiative of the ConRuhr office in New York supported by the consortium of the three universities in Bochum, Dortmund, and Duisburg- Essen located in the Ruhrgebiet area. We want to connect Americans who have studied, spend sabbaticals, lectured or worked otherwise at the universities or in the Ruhrarea in general and are now pursuing their career in the United States. RuhrFans are also Germans who owe their career to the Ruhrgebiet and now have chosen the United States as their transient or permanent home. We hope that all of you remember with joy and pride your stay in the Ruhrgebiet and as “ Kumpel “ are interested to meet old acquaintances ,share your memories, experiences and achievements with one another and want to keep abreast with most recent developments

This is the first Newsletter of the RuhrFans; it will inform you on the mission of ConRuhr Office, its activities, plans for the RuhrFans, and the latest news from the Ruhrgebiet. Enjoy reading it, we invite you to contribute to this growing community and are looking forward to your cooperation

I, a RuhrFan having worked for 25 years as Director at the Max Planck Institute in Dortmund, hope to meet soon with you in person at some of the events we organize, you are cordially invited to participate. If you want to contact me earlier, just call me in New York.

With best regards

Und einem herzlichen Glückauf !

Rolf Kinne, M.D., Ph.D.

Director ConRuhr

P.S.: Please keep your fingers crossed that Germany becomes the Soccer World Champion!

ConRuhr

### **ConWHO? –**

#### **The ConRuhr Office in New York**

The Office was inaugurated in November 2004 in New York by the Minister of Science of North-Rhine-Westphalia and the deans of the universities of Bochum, Dortmund and Duisburg-Essen. The three universities formed a consortium to create the office under the auspices of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), which provides operational support and space in the German House in New York, which is also home to the Consulate General of Germany and the Permanent German Representation at the UN.

The mission of the office is 1. To enhance and facilitate student exchange between the ConRuhr universities and American academic institutions 2. To improve and expand the network between American academics and academics from the ConRuhr universities and 3. To strengthen and increase the awareness of the Ruhrarea as an area of excellence in research and academic education.

The office is currently staffed with LeeAnn Renninger, Ph.D. who has a degree in Psychology from the University of Vienna .She received her early education in the USA and afterwards spent several years in Germany. She acts as Executive Director.

The office is headed by Rolf Kinne, M.D., Ph.D., a retired senior scientist from the Max Planck Institute in Dortmund, where he was a Director for twenty five years. In addition to his scientific contributions he helped to foster the development of and to create networks in Biotechnology and in Science in the Ruhrgebiet.

The ConRuhr office has collected data on courses that are taught in English, on Centers of Research excellence, and International Graduate Schools at the three universities and plays as pivotal role in developing marketing tools for the ConRuhr universities. In addition, it organizes workshops and meetings where American and German experts come together and discuss areas of common interest. These reach from questions related to Immigration, to Materials Sciences, and Science Journalism, to name a few .It also acts as the central point to provide information for professors, for student advisors and students about academic activities and study abroad programs both in Germany and the USA ) and provides help in finding funding for these endeavors. Last but not least we have compiled an impressive list of potential RuhrFans (about 600) who are all receiving this Newsletter and hopefully will join the network. For further information please see our website at [www.con-ruhr.org](http://www.con-ruhr.org). (R.K.)

## **News from the Ruhr Area**

### Protests against tuition fees

On May 11th about 150 protest students occupied the administrative building on the campus of University of Duisburg-Essen.

With a 9-point-catalogue they required primarily the withdrawal of the rectorate's proposal for tuition fees. President Prof. Zechlin expressed his regret about the

occupancy. This behavior works against the intense dialogue of the last month between students and the university. Contrary to Prof. Zechlin's impression, the students don't feel supported in their interests. ASTA, the student body representation, criticized the missing good-will to dialogue.

Because of occupation police was informed and cleared the building. About 100 persons left before end of the ultimatum, 50 students underwent police investigations. (S.K.)

### Nine work groups of the University Duisburg-Essen at the ACHEMA

A skull implant, which will decompose in the human body and fuel cells, which are powering a scooter were two of the exhibits of the University Duisburg-Essen at the ACHEMA (May 15<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup>) in Frankfurt am Main. Altogether nine groups presented their research and dissertations at a booth of 274 square meters.

Other topics at the fair were energy recovery with waste materials, adoption of bio-materials in medicine and the network among medics, engineering- and natural scientists. ACHEMA is with about 4000 exhibitors from all over the world the largest forum of industry for chemical engineering, protection of the environment and biotechnology in the world. (S.K.)

### Scientists discover new gene variant of adiposity

The weighing machine doesn't show the ideal weight? The reason can be in the genes: About ten percent of population do have a variation of genes which raise the risk of overweight and adiposity at childhood and adulthood. An international team of scientists including a group of Prof. Dr. Johannes Hebebrand, President of the Clinic for Psychiatry and Psychotherapy for Children and Teenager, for the first time they could analyze about 100.000 variations of genes in human genotype – they found a new "thickener": rs7566605.

Read more at:

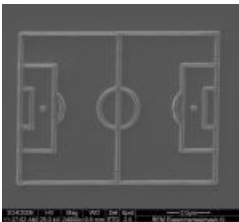
www.uni-  
 duisburgessen.de/home/fb/presse/presse\_3/presse\_20.04.2006\_20220.shtml)  
 (S.K.)

To create a better quality of study – But not strictly against tuition fees

On May 22nd the senate of the University of Bochum decided to establish a committee charged to recommend improvements of study conditions and to develop proposals how tuition fees can be used to finance these changes.

The student representatives wanted to create a committee with the charge to investigate possibilities to reduce the universities running expenses without lay off of personell and without the introduction of tuition fees. The senate voted the students proposal down with a slim majority. A committee with similar charges has been established at the University of Dortmund. (S.K.)

RUB-physicists created the smallest soccer field of the world – in scale 1 to 10 millions



Andreas Westphalen, doctoral candidate at the Department of Experimental Physics (Prof. Dr. Hartmut Zabel), created the assumedly smallest soccer field of the world. Instead of 100 x 70 meters it measures just 10 x 7 micrometer. It is downsized at a coefficient of 10 millions and just to see with an electron microscope. Borderlines are 200 nanometer expanded. This field fits onto one facet of a midge's eye! What about the ball? (S.K.)

NRW-“Freedom of Law” for universities should create self-government

The government of NRW wants to release universities into independence. Universities and Universities of Applied Sciences will be able to decide on

finances, personell and organization on their own. If the Hochschulfreiheitsgesetz becomes effective, there is, however, the risk for mismanaging universities to end up in bankruptcy. That's one point of the law, which was approved by the cabinet of Duesseldorf and now is in progress. It should come to a vote before the summer break and the Hochschulfreiheitsgesetz will finally be effective on January 1<sup>st</sup> 2007.

The three crucial points are:

1. Universities will become public corporations and will no longer exist as governmental institutions.
2. The law will create new structures of responsibility assignment.
3. The government will no longer be part of explicit regulation inside the universities.

#### Ruhr2010 – European Capital of Culture (ECOC 2010)

The Ruhrgebiet will be the European Capital of Culture in the year 2010. The vote of the EU-jury is a great success for the entire region. Many have kept their fingers crossed for and with us. Now it is up to the region to prepare for the ECOC 2010. Three and a half years seem like a long time – but in relation to the size of the enterprise, the number of players, cities, institutions and off-scenes they're not. The ECOC team and its moderator are now preparing the steps ahead...

What's going to happen next? In November 2006 the EU council will most likely confirm the jury vote. The Ruhrgebiet will then officially bear the title "European Capital of Culture 2010". Financial means by public authorities will probably only be disbursed after this official confirmation. A Company Ltd. will be established for the preparation and organisation of the project "ECOC 2010". The company will make sure to bring all the loose ends together and make the project a broad and firmly rooted event. Associates for the ECOC company will probably be the Regional Association of

the Ruhr (Regionalverband Ruhr) (thus comprising all 53 cities of the region), the City of Essen (which assumed the responsibility to disburse 6 million Euros for 2010), the government of Northrhine-Westphalia and the “Initiativkreis Ruhrgebiet” (as a representative to the major enterprises in the region). Read more at: <http://www.welcome-europe.com/>

### FIRA RoboWorld Cup 2006: Soccer-robots will fight for the world-championship in Dortmund

Their names are not Ballack, Klose or Asamoah, but they are as dangerous as real soccer player: Soccer-robots at FIRA RoboWorld Cup 2006 of the University of Dortmund. Scientists and students from all over the world will compete with their robots against the other computer-operated metal cubes and robots from June 30<sup>th</sup> till July 3<sup>rd</sup>. With the background of the “Fan Fest”, it’s “Fan Hall” and the location near by the championship stadium the Dortmunder Westfalenhalle is the best place to let this happen.

After 11 times the FIRA RoboWorld Cup took place in June it will occur for the first time in Germany. The event will be arranged by Dr. Norbert Jesse, head of the Chair of Computer Science of the University of Dortmund. Since 1999 their team named “Dortmund Droids” participate very successful. In 2002 they became runner-up of European and world championship. This event is supported by the minister of innovation Andreas Pinkwart, who will be in Dortmund to watch the “Dortmund Droids”.

#### **Useful Links**

Website ConRuhr: [www.conruhr.org](http://www.conruhr.org)

Website University of Bochum: [www.ruhr-uni-bochum.de](http://www.ruhr-uni-bochum.de)

Website University of Dortmund: [www.uni-dortmund.de](http://www.uni-dortmund.de)

Website University of Duisburg-Essen: [www.uni-duisburg-essen.de](http://www.uni-duisburg-essen.de)

Website Initiativkreis Ruhrgebiet: [www.i-r.de](http://www.i-r.de)

Website Regionalverband Ruhr: [www.rvr-online.de](http://www.rvr-online.de)

## Coming Events

ATLANTIC TRANSFER – GREAT IDEAS ARE MOBILE

A Series of Conferences in San Francisco, New York and Chicago

- Atlantic Transfer of Ideas – Mobility and Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century  
June 16<sup>th</sup> 2006 University of San Francisco - Lone Mountain Conference Center  
[www.atlantic-transfer.org/san\\_francisco.html](http://www.atlantic-transfer.org/san_francisco.html)
- Science into Society – Climate Change and Cloning for the Average Joe?  
New Challenges in Reporting on Science  
October 6<sup>th</sup> 2006 German House, New York  
[www.atlantic-transfer.org/new\\_york.html](http://www.atlantic-transfer.org/new_york.html)
- Science to Industry – Knowledge Transfer from Society to Industry: How (and Why) to Foster Entrepreneurship  
November 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> 2006 Illinois Institute of Technology  
[www.atlantic-transfer.org/Chicago.html](http://www.atlantic-transfer.org/Chicago.html)

## Imprint

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