Dear colleagues,

I’m happy to report on the recent developments of the Gutenberg Research College at Johannes Gutenberg University. The third term of office ended for the executive committee and alongside other members, Mathias Neubert, former director of the GRC, retired from his office. At this point I would like to thank him once more for his dedicated and successful work during the last six years. I also want to express my gratitude to the executive committee members who have left the GRC after several years of active engagement.

In this newsletter I will present you the remaining and the new members of the committee. You will find experienced researchers from different faculties and from other research institutes in Mainz. If you have any questions about or suggestions for the GRC, don’t hesitate to contact the committee member of your choice.

It is our aspiration to use the established funding instrument of the GRC fellowships most effectively and to support every single fellow and their research projects in the best possible way. Therefore, our fellowships contain different measures like the relief from academic teaching or the development of joint working groups with external fellows and cooperation partners from Mainz. In 2017, we announced the so-called “Zielgerade” (“home stretch”) fellowships for the first time. We have initiated this fellowship model to support GRC fellows who will finish a big scientific, scholarly or artistic project in the next semesters.

If you consider suggesting an excellent researcher or artist for a GRC fellowship, we recommend you to contact us early, so we can develop a suitable model together. GRC fellowships can be granted to excellent researchers of JGU, as well as to researchers from other institutions who are going to work permanently or temporarily at JGU.

GRC executive committee starts fourth term of office with new director

In October 2016 the fourth term of office of the GRC executive committee has started. The president appointed eleven new members for the executive committee after their approval by the Senate. Beside excellent scientists from nearly all faculties of JGU, there are several members from cooperating research institutes in Mainz: the Institute of Molecular Biology (IMB), the Max Planck Institute for Chemistry, the Helmholtz Institute Mainz (HIM) and the Roman-Germanic Central Museum (Leibniz Archaeological Research Institute). Representatives of the non-professorial academic staff and students guarantee the inclusion of all academic levels in the executive committee.

The new executive committee elected Thomas Heike, professor for Old Testament Studies at the Catholic Theological Faculty, as new GRC director. He follows the physicist Matthias Neubert who directed the college successfully for six years. Susann Schweiger, professor for Human Genetics at the University Medical Center Mainz, was elected as deputy director, as the previous deputy, the linguist Damaris Nübling, also left the committee. The legal scholar Eva Ellen Wagner follows the biologist Christian Berger as representative of the GRC network.

If you have suggestions or questions regarding our functions and funding opportunities, I am happy to talk to you. I am looking forward to receiving your e-mail.

Yours sincerely,

Thomas Heike
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: MEMBERS

Prof. Dr. Walter Bisang  
Faculty 05: Department of English and Linguistics

Jens Blobner  
Student member, Faculty 06

Prof. Dr. Dilek Dizdar  
Faculty 06: Interdisciplinary German Studies

Prof. Dr. Thomas Hieke  
GRC Director, Faculty 01: Catholic Theology, Department of Old Testament Studies

Prof. Dr. Stefan Hirschauer  
Faculty 02: Institute of Sociology

Prof. Dr. Doris Prechel  
Faculty 07: Department of Ancient Studies

Prof. Dr. Susann Schweiger  
Deputy GRC Director, Faculty 04: Institute of Human Genetics

Prof. Dr. Jairo Sinova  
Faculty 08: Institute of Physics

Prof. Dr. Heike Urlich  
Institute of Molecular Biology, Faculty 10: Biology

Dr. Eva Ellen Wagner  
Representative of the GRC network, Faculty 05: Department of Public Law, International and European Law, Media Law

Prof. Dr. Dr. Walter Bisang  
Faculty 05: Department of English and Linguistics

Jens Blobner  
Student member, Faculty 06

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Faculty 08: Institute of Physics

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Institute of Molecular Biology, Faculty 10: Biology

Dr. Eva Ellen Wagner  
Representative of the GRC network, Faculty 05: Department of Public Law, International and European Law, Media Law

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: DEPUTY MEMBERS

Prof. Dr. Stefan Hirschauer  
Faculty 02: Institute of Sociology

Dr. Alexandra W. Busch  
Roman-Germanic Central Museum

Prof. Dr. Gerald Haug  
Max Planck Institute for Chemistry

Prof. Stefan Irnich  
Faculty 03: Logistics Management

Prof. Dr. Frank Maas  
Helmholtz Institute Mainz; Faculty 08: Institute of Nuclear Physics

Prof. Dr. Michael Matheus  
Faculty 07: Department of History

Prof. Dr. Stefan Hirschauer  
Faculty 02: Institute of Sociology

Dr. Alexandra W. Busch  
Roman-Germanic Central Museum

Prof. Dr. Gerald Haug  
Max Planck Institute for Chemistry

Prof. Stefan Irnich  
Faculty 03: Logistics Management

Prof. Dr. Frank Maas  
Helmholtz Institute Mainz; Faculty 08: Institute of Nuclear Physics

Prof. Dr. Michael Matheus  
Faculty 07: Department of History

Dr. Judith Maria Poersch  
Student member, Faculty 05: Department of Romance Studies

Prof. Dr. Wolfram Ruf  
Faculty 04: Center for Thrombosis and Hemostasis (CTH)

Dr. Thomas Türken  
Faculty 09: Institute of Geosciences

Prof. Dr. Siegfried Wolskogel  
Faculty 09: Institute of Organic Chemistry

Prof. Dr. Eva Wolf  
Faculty 10: Biology; Institute of Molecular Biology

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Prof. Dr. Eva Wolf  
Faculty 10: Biology; Institute of Molecular Biology
NEW FELLOWS

Donald Bruce Dingwell is among the leading volcanologists worldwide. He became internationally renowned for the experimental investigation of the physical properties of volcanic systems, in particular his research on silicate melts and glasses. In the past years he focused on the kinetic processes of volcanic systems and eruptions. Dingwell will – as a GRC fellow in cooperation with the Institute of Geosciences – investigate the release of halogens during and after volcanic eruptions.

His outstanding work earned him several honors, for example the honorary doctorate of the University of Alberta and the University College London as well as the Federal Cross of Merit. Furthermore, he was secretary general of the European Research Council and is currently president of the International Association of Volcanology and Chemistry of the Earth’s Interior (IAVCEI).

The well-known physicist Victor Flambaum is professor at the School of Physics at the University of New South Wales in Australia. His research encompasses different areas of theoretical physics – from particle and nuclear physics to cosmology. He is known for his successful collaboration with experimental groups and initiatives which led to many groundbreaking results. During the last few years he has already established contacts with different research groups at JGU. Over the course of the next three years he will work regularly at Helmholtz Institute Mainz (HIM) and the Institute of Physics of JGU. Together with his colleagues, he will analyze temporal and spatial variations of fundamental constants as well as continue the search for dark matter.

Peter Kiefer is professor at the Mainz School of Music, where he leads the unique master’s course Sound Art Composition since 2009. His artistic presentations in renowned houses, at festivals, and in public spaces have won him national and international recognition as a sound artist. He consistently searched for new fields of activity and application beyond the subject area of sound art and thereby was a major contributor to its further development. Kiefer’s groundbreaking exhibition about sound art and the resultant anthology Klangräume der Kunst presented a historical abstract and a systematization of his subject which became a widely adopted milestone.

The philosopher Eric Watkins is among the most renowned Kant experts worldwide. He has published a pioneering monograph on Kant and the Metaphysics of Causality and his research also includes the reception of Kant in the academic discussions of his time as well as in succeeding periods. His expertise and also his excellent international network will advance Kant research in Mainz and the whole Rhine-Main area. Watkins will be visiting Mainz on a regular basis and be part of major conferences as well as workshops on the philosophy of modern times with a focus on Kant.
In May 2016 the biomedical expert VISHVA DIXIT, Vice President for Early Discovery Research and Director of the postdoctoral program at the Californian company Genentech, received the Gutenberg Research Award 2016. With this award the GRC has honored Dixit’s groundbreaking research on apoptosis, a form of programmed cell death, where the cell destructs itself. His work enabled the development of new therapies against cancer or neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer. Moreover, Dixit identified the components of inflammasome, a complex of proteins that enables the immune system to fight infections. Most recently he achieved pioneering discoveries on ubiquitination and deubiquitination of proteins during the emergence of cancer.

During the annual celebration the chemist KLAUS MÜLLEN was welcomed as new GRC fellow. The former director of the Max Planck Institute for Polymer Research is among the most renowned scientists in experimental chemistry and polymer research worldwide.

In July 2016 members of the GRC and the Gutenberg Academy for Young Researchers discussed “Interdisciplinary: Chances and Challenges”. First junior professor SEBASTIAN LERCH and GRC fellow OLGA ZLATKIN-TROITSCHANSKAIA introduced the topic from different angles. Then DORIS PRECHL, member of the GRC Executive Committee, and JOHANNES DAXENBERGER of TU Darmstadt presented an interdisciplinary research project involving their respective fields classical studies and computer sciences.

In another presentation, the new GRC fellow VICTOR FLAMBAUM from the University of New South Wales talked about “Dark matter, space-time variation of the physical constants and origin of life” and illustrated new ways for theoretical and experimental physics.

The Executive Committee met for an internal Gewölbegespräch in February 2017 and reflected upon recent developments and further possibilities to support excellent researchers and innovative research projects. The members of the Executive Committee also discussed intensely the GRC’s task to advise the JGU authorities and the faculties with regard to general strategic decisions concerning research funding.
In March 2016, GRC fellow MATTHIAS SCHOTT received the teaching award of Rhineland-Palatinate.

WALTER BISANG, member of the GRC Executive Committee, was elected as a full member of the Academy Europaea. He is assigned to the humanistic class of the academy, which focuses on the promotion of education and science worldwide.

In September 2016, GRC Fellow KLAUS MÜLLEN received the Hermann-Staudinger-Preis by the Gesellschaft Deutscher Chemiker (GDCh) for his research on the synthesis of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons and 2D-macromolecules for electronic components.

In November 2016, DILEK DIZDAR, member of the GRC Executive Committee and one of the founders of the translation platform "Translate for Justice", was awarded the Hermann Kesten Prize by the German PEN Center which honored the work of the translation platform. Moreover, she was involved in the "Academics for Peace" initiative, which has received the "Aachener Friedenspreis". As a mentor she also supported the successful application of JGU for an endangered academic who will receive a scholarship by the Philipp Schwartz Initiative.

In 2016, GRC fellow SILVIA HANSEN-SCHIRRA has established the Translation and Cognition Center (TRA&CO) in Germersheim. The TRA&CO is one of the first neurolinguistics laboratories and combines EEG with eye tracking and keylogging to gain new insights about translational didactics and translation competence.

The Shanghai Institute of Liver Diseases at Fudan University has appointed former GRC fellow DETLEF SCHUPPAN as an external consultant. In the next years he will also be a member of an interdisciplinary research team in the Leibniz research project Wheat-scan. In this project, as well as in a DFG supported cooperation project with the university Hohenheim, he will investigate the causes and basics of wheat intolerance.

Several GRC fellows of the University Medical Center Mainz were involved in successful applications for collaborative research centers. KRISHNARAJ RAJA LINGAM and JONATHAN KIPNIS are part of the CRC TR-128 Initiating/effector versus regulatory mechanisms in Multiple Sclerosis, which was extended for four years. JOCHEN ROEPER conducts research in the new CRC 1193 Neurobiology of Resilience to stress-related mental dysfunction from understanding mechanisms to promoting prevention, and AMPARO ACKER-PALMER is speaker of the extended CRC 1080 Molecular and Cellular Mechanisms of Neural Homeostasis.

GRC fellow CORNELIA SCHWEPPE is part of the German-Dutch cooperation project The Transnationalization of Long-Term Care Regimes. The project will be funded by the DFG and the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) for the next three years and will compare long-term care in Germany and the Netherlands.

GRC fellow JOHANNES HENN received the prestigious ERC Consolidator Grant. He will use it in the next five years to promote new methods of calculation in theoretical physics.

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