

FRIAS IN DIALOGUE WITH RESEARCH COLLEGES WORLDWIDE

UBIAS STEERING COMMITTEE MEETS IN NEW DELHI



From 22nd to 25th March 2012, the Steering Committee of the global network of University-Based Institutes for Advanced Study (UBIAS), founded in Freiburg in October 2010, convened in the Indian capital New Delhi for a working conference to explore the prospects for further collaboration within the network and to reach agreements on its academic and strategic goals. Dialogue between institutes from all over the world was resumed here in a highly focussed atmosphere. The meeting took place at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), one of India's leading research universities, at the invitation of the Jawaharlal Nehru Institute of Advanced Study (JNIAS) and its director, distinguished historian Prof. Aditya Mukherjee. The convention was organized jointly by the institutes in New Delhi and Freiburg. Eight Institutes for Advanced Study (IAS), from Helsinki, Jerusalem, Nagoya, New Delhi, Perth, São Paulo, Vancouver and Freiburg, were represented. The Freiburg delegation consisted of the Speaker of the Board of Directors, Prof. Werner Frick, Head Administrator Dr. Carsten Dose and FRIAS consultant Dr. Anna Ertel.

Thanks to instructive talks by the JNU's Vice Chancellor and Rector, Prof. Sudhir Kumar Sopory and Prof. Sudha Pai, as well as by the Deans of the JNU and international fellows at JNIAS, the meeting provided an opportunity to learn more about the specific situation of an IAS at an elite university in an emerging country. It also allowed those present to discuss both current regional developments on the South Asian subcontinent and trends in the 21st century's global academic community with leading Indian academics.

SPECIFIC EXCHANGE FORMATS FOR THE FUTURE

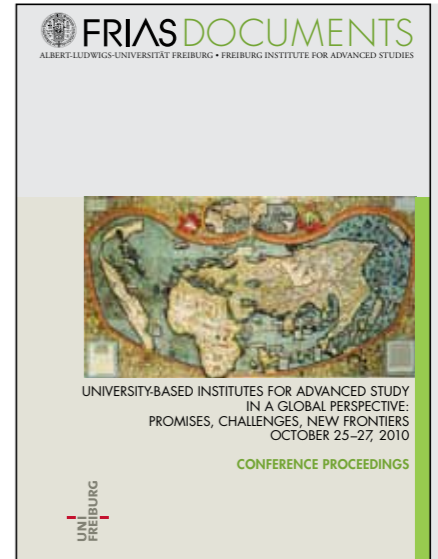
The meeting yielded many valuable stimuli and concrete ideas for the future of the UBIAS network, and the aim is now to implement these over the coming years. The UBIAS network wishes to organize academic conferences on interdisciplinary issues of global significance every two years. To start the series, a symposium is planned for 2013 at the Peter Wall Institute for Advanced Study (PWI-AS) at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. Complement-

ing these academic activities, regular directors' meetings (the first one in Jerusalem in the spring of 2013) will be held with the aim of reinforcing collaboration between member institutes. These meetings will take place biennially, each on a different continent, and they will regularly include the discussion of local features relating to the respective host institute and its academic as well as socio-political environment. Sharing experience and learning about best practices in the governance and management of UBIAS was viewed by all participants as a valuable addition to academic networking. Moreover, participants agreed that the institutional diversity of research organisations represented in the UBIAS network is a huge asset for an association that aims to be open and inclusive. The UBIAS label has united institutes with extremely diverse disciplinary affiliations and varying greatly in size. They share the characteristics of promoting top-level international research through fellowship programmes, creating a forum for innovative scientific approaches (often interdisciplinary in nature), and of belonging to universities with which they continuously interact in a productive way. Since the recent launch of the website at www.ubias.net all UBIAS members now have a joint platform where individual institutes can present themselves in short profiles and can exchange and disseminate information on events or fellowship announcements.

FOCUS ON PROMOTING JUNIOR RESEARCHERS

Yet another exchange format outlined during the Delhi meeting and specifically directed at the institutes' early-stage academics are regular UBIAS Summer Academies for junior researchers. Each summer academy is to be organized in two consecutive years by two host institutes on different continents. The aim is to enable promising doctoral candidates and postdocs to enter into focussed exchange with internationally renowned experts on issues of global relevance, thus creating sustainable networks for future leaders who would greatly benefit from these networks in their prospective careers. The UBIAS member institutes of Nagoya and São Paulo have agreed to jointly organize a pilot academy along these lines.

At the conclusion of the Delhi meeting the participants agreed that – thanks not least to its openness – the new UBIAS network will be highly effective and offer myriad opportunities as a platform for a globally active, dynamic association of Institutes for Advanced Study. The task of the 2013 UBIAS conference in Vancouver will be to lend concrete academic substance to the concepts formulated by the Steering Committee in New Delhi, and to further develop them in congenial dialogue with all institutes in the global UBIAS community. (*ael/wf*)



UBIAS stands for University-Based Institutes for Advanced Study. The UBIAS network was founded in 2010 in Freiburg. Detailed documentation on the Freiburg conference can be requested by writing to info@frias.uni-freiburg.de (key word: UBIAS documentation). For further information about the network, the participating institutes (of which there are over 30) and their events, public announcements, etc., please visit www.ubias.net.