

Notes from Alumni Meeting held on Monday, February 9th 2009, 6 to 8 PM
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Present:

Jörg Metger, Consul-General of Montreal and his wife Erika
Anja Mengewein, Speaker for Cultural Affairs, General Consulate of Montreal
Irmtraud Jost (chairperson), Executive Director, Heidelberg University Association
Heidelberg Alumni: Mo Klinkert (co-chair), Jörg Klinkert, Dusica Maysinger, Jose Nieto, Claude Piché

Steps towards formation of HACA. To establish a “Heidelberg Alumni Canada” (HACA), an initial task is to contact the more than 200 Canadian and Canada-based alumni to inform them of the university’s interest in such an organization. An exhaustive web-based address search will be carried out by Mo Klinkert. In the meantime, steps will be taken to register HACA as a non-profit membership association, and Peter Nazaruk, an alumnus with knowledge in the necessary formalities will be approached for help. Heidelberg Alumni International (HAI) has hopes to see HACA come into being by the end of this year.

Benefits. A discussion of what Heidelberg University can offer HACA club members followed. Several benefits include providing information about developments at the university, sponsoring scholarships, serving as a base for mentoring and networking and helping with organized trips to Heidelberg (for example in 2011 to coincide with the university’s 625th birthday celebrations). For those in academia, exchanges between students and initiation of cooperation projects are foreseeable.

HACA activities. Ideas were plentiful and received with enthusiasm. Because of distance constraints in Canada, alumni “chapters” would be created for different regions, depending on where most potential members live or work. Regional events such as a “Stammtisch” on a semi-annual basis for a designated area could be arranged. Other inspiring events could take the form of lectures or round-table discussions by visiting scholars from the university and dignitaries, such as Nobel laureates. National events may include an annual get-together and dinner. Last but not least, interest was expressed in the creation of a newsletter.

Current events in Montreal.

March 13th 2009: Anja Mengewein informed us that the International Relations Office of the University of Quebec in Montreal is organizing an information event, where representatives of various German institutions have been invited to present themselves. His schedule permitting, Claude Piché kindly volunteered to participate as a Canadian alumnus for Heidelberg University. In this context, alumni were encouraged to act as ambassadors to all Montreal-based universities, more easily facilitated following HACA’s official launching.

March 31st 2009: Jörg Klinkert reported that the Alexander von Humboldt German International School in Montreal is holding an information evening for interested students and parents about attending German universities and sponsoring possibilities. Heidelberg University will be represented by Elisabeth Trnka, Coordinator of Student Exchange Programs with Universities in the U.S. and Canada, and alumni, including a Canadian student (Eric Leblanc) who has just returned to Montreal.

May 2009. The Consul-General Jörg Metger again offered to host the second Alumni meeting in Montreal. One highlight could be to commemorate Jose Nieto’s 50 years of PhD award from Heidelberg University.