



Press Release

## Academic Pioneers

University College Freiburg celebrates first graduating class of Liberal Arts and Sciences students

The first graduating class of the University College Freiburg (UCF) received their diplomas on 15 October 2016. Fifty students from ten countries completed the English-taught Liberal Arts and Sciences (LAS) bachelor's program – the first of its kind in Germany. The degree program features problem- and research-oriented instruction and offers formats designed to encourage intellectual freedom and foster exchange between various disciplines and knowledge cultures. The students select a major in the second year of the program – culture and history, life sciences, earth and environmental sciences, or governance.

The UCF was established at the University of Freiburg in 2012 according to a Dutch model. "This occasion is proof that University College Freiburg, which is designed as a learning lab, has established itself in the German higher education landscape with its unique qualities," says Rector Prof. Dr. **Hans-Jochen Schiewer**. He added that the LAS program shows that it is still possible to implement new instructional formats after the Bologna reform, which gives degree programs

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- a rigid formal structure and offers students few possibilities for building up an individual educational profile. “LAS students conduct multiperspectival and problem-oriented work. They learn how to check facts and data, to compare different forms of knowledge, and to approach academic as well as practical problems from different perspectives,” emphasizes Prof. Dr. **Juliane Besters-Dilger**, vice president for academic affairs.

“Since they examine social challenges like sustainability and global justice from an interdisciplinary perspective in the course of the program, graduates are qualified for internationally oriented starting positions at social organizations or private enterprises as well as for careers in research,” says Dr. **Ursula Glunk**, academic director of UCF. This year’s graduates aim to embark on various paths with their bachelor’s degrees: Around half of them have enrolled in master’s programs at renowned institutions like University of Oxford, Johns Hopkins University, Penn State University, or the Charité teaching hospital in Berlin. The fields of study range from molecular medicine, education, and political science to a master’s program that combines agricultural science with technology and sustainability. Several of the graduates have chosen to enter a profession directly and have been hired by institutions like the Goethe Institute, Human Rights Watch, and Theater Freiburg.

UCF currently has around 300 matriculated LAS students. Each year the team receives more than 300 applications for the 80 places in the program.

### **University College Freiburg**

The University of Freiburg achieves top positions in all university rankings. Its research, teaching, and continuing education have received prestigious awards in nationwide competitions. Over 24,000 students from 100 nations are enrolled in 188 degree programs. Around 5,000 teachers and administrative employees put in their effort every day – and experience that family friendliness, equal opportunity, and environmental protection are more than just empty phrases here.

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