



## BLUE COMMUNITY BLUE UNIVERSITIES



### Short notes from the 2nd international exchange on April 8, 2024, via Zoom

Roland Brunner welcomes to this second international exchange among Blue Universities. He sent the suggested agenda for today's exchange in advance. Are there no additional topics coming up, so the agenda is approved.

#### 1. Announcements and new Blue Universities

**Maude Barlow** wrote: "I am sorry I will not be able to attend. I will be officiating at the convocation for Brescia University, where I serve as Chancellor. I wish you all a productive meeting. I am very heartened by the growing interest in Blue Communities around the world and I am hopeful we are on the cusp of real growth. As you know, the water crisis is very real and we must all now turn our attention to "matters blue". With warm regards to all, Maude"

The first new Blue University we can welcome since our last session in October last year is the **St. Paul University Ottawa, Canada**. Executive Director **Joe Gunn** wrote: "Unfortunately, I'll be on a plane to Europe (Scotland) when you meet. However, I am glad to participate in your network of university Blue Communities. Most of my work is with faith communities, and we often focus specifically on environmental issues - in mid-April, for example, this capital city will host a UN meeting on plastics pollution as we try to move to a global ban. UStP announced it had divested from fossil fuels last year (after a year-long campaign by campus organizations.) [Our Blue Community announcement is here.](#)"

Then we can welcome a first Blue University from Brussels, Belgium. [The University of Saint-Louis, site UCLouvain](#), became a Blue University mid-February this year. Camille Bertaux is present and presents the university and their [adherence to the Blue Community](#).

The universities in the French speaking countries go a bit a different way, as there is a project "Université bleue", where universities are officially being labelled based on a thorough assessment before the certification. Vanessa Charlotte from the Coordination EAU Île-de-France explains their proceedings. [For the project Université Bleue see here.](#)

Another institution we may welcome among the Blue Universities is [Eawag](#), one of the world's leading aquatic research institutes, part of the Swiss ETH. Their affiliation as Blue Community is not official yet, as we are awaiting the certificate from Canada to have it communicated.

**Christoph Luethy**, Head of the Department Sanitation, Water and Solid Waste for Development at Eawag, wrote for our today's session: "I'm teaching a seasonal school with 20 students from West Africa for 2 weeks starting Monday (today) - I'm teaching all day, sorry! Gladly at the next exchange..."

#### 2. Update: What happened at your university since our first exchange? Activities around world water day 2024? Highlights?

together with the next point on the agenda:

#### 3. Best practice: What is so far the most successful measure taken to implement the Blue Community principles at your university?

Participants share their rich activities and experience as Blue Universities. Some participants prepared presentations. They are invited to [send them to Roland Brunner](#) for sharing them in the Blue University network.

#### **4. Water Committee: Plans and questions from the Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Paraná, Brazil**

Elias Wolff shares their efforts to have an official Water Committee established at the Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Paraná, Brazil. The rector already approved the plan, and the Water Committee shall be established in September. But they are now looking for experience and examples how that is set up at other universities.

Andreas Klay explains how this is done at the University of Bern, Switzerland. You may find [the basic document here](#) with links leading further.

At Zurich University, Linde Warland reports on an informal exchange with representatives of different faculties and departments, to identify who is doing what related to water.

Further information and inputs to the question of Elias Wolff would be highly appreciated.

#### **5. Database on research & teaching / new Blue Community website**

After our first exchange, we started collecting information about projects, research, teaching being done on Blue Universities. The information we got is available on our Swiss Blue Community website in a [basic Excel-Sheet](#). The university of St. Gallen announced their entry to come soon. Other universities are still invited to add their relevant information [directly into the google-doc](#) or to send the filled [word questionnaire](#) to Roland Brunner.

In the coming days, there will be a [new international Blue Community website](#), and the information about the international Blue University network will be moved there. We hope for your contribution with information and your participation in keeping the site vivid and useful.

#### **6. Next exchange: who takes over?**

At our first exchange in October last year, we agreed to meet online twice a year. The universities in Switzerland have another exchange twice a year on national level. There the responsibility is rotating, with always one university taking over the task to coordinate, invite and host the exchange for one year, i.e. two meetings. This model works very well, and Roland would be happy to see it also on the international level. He is asking if any of the universities now present would be willing to take over the chair for one year, i.e. for the next two meetings, or at least for one. For the moment, nobody feels confident enough to take over, but we will discuss it again at the next exchange sometime mid-October.

#### **End of the session**

Notes by Roland Brunner, Blue Community Zurich. April 9, 2024