

Jahresbericht fsmb 2020

The **Fachschaft Medizin Bern** is an organization of students for students of the medical faculty of the University of Bern. The fsmb aims to facilitate and optimize studies and to represent the interests of medical students. As the official representative of Bern's medical students, the fsmb has seats in various committees. In addition, the fsmb offers several services for the students and organizes many events in pandemic-free years.

Since the end of 2019, the Fachschaft executive board has established the Education Commission (**Bildungskommission**, BK). This separation is to serve a clearer division of tasks. As an organ of fsmb, the BK deals with all issues and topics related to education and studies. We meet at least twice a semester to discuss current issues in medical education from a student perspective. Permanent members are our delegates in the various committees and commissions of the medical faculty of the University of Bern, the swimsa delegates and representatives and speakers of each academic year.

With the introduction of the Education Commission, representatives and speakers in each academic year (**Jahressprecher*innen**) were also introduced. The yearly representatives are members of the fsmb executive board, who form the link between the board and the students of years 1 to 6. They are the first point of contact for problems, questions and concerns of the students, and pass all the upcoming on to the fsmb executive board, the deanery, the faculty or other contact points.



FSMB Executive Board at the General Assembly in Fall 2020

For us, as for everyone on earth, 2020 was a little different from other years: Things got cancelled, events needed to be reorganized or postponed. But we kept our heads held up high and focused on the positive. We would like to tell you about some things that did not get cancelled this year but a little rearranged. We also included stories from students and their experiences of what it was and is like to study during a pandemic.



Skiweekend 2020 in the Aletsch Arena

Every year in February, 60 lucky students join the fsmb for a fun- and action-filled **Skiweekend** in the Aletsch Arena. This year however, the attending students were even luckier than they could have possibly imagined: the Skiweekend was the first – and at the same time last – normal event organised and carried out by the fsmb before Covid-19 started to affect Switzerland. We can therefore give a brief and proud overview over our only event in 2020 (this far, fingers crossed):

Early Saturday morning, the students arrived in Fiesch by train. Everyone, except for a few latecomers, was given their ski-ticket, some part of the luggage that needed to be carried (mainly food and beverages for the next two days) and up the mountain they went. The luggage was stored away in our rooms at the Berghaus Kühboden which is situated right in the middle of the ski area. A short group-picture-session later, everyone was off skiing or snowboarding in the over 100km of slopes. After an exhausting day, the dinner provided by the Berghaus team was excellent – as always – and even included tasty vegan options. The communal dinner was followed by games, drinking and good conversations between students from years 1 to 4. Sometime around 4 in the morning even the last few people went to bed, only to get up again at 7 for some early-morning yoga. After a short breakfast and preparation of lunch packs, everyone enjoyed the rest of the day in the mountains and left for home whenever they were ready.

We look back on an amazing weekend where friendships and even relationships were formed that would otherwise never have been. Sun, fun and snow combined with a dash of sport: ideal combination for a perfect little memory to brighten up the rest of 2020 from home.

From the 5-year plan and other coincidences.

Teacher of the year: *Pascal Küpfer*

When you study medicine, you enter a world of planning. For the first time you see the timetable, hear about complicated therapy plans and the always full surgery schedules. You try to remember and understand everything and at the same time plan your free time as efficiently as possible. Then you put together a neatly worked out learning plan and if it fails, you sit completely aimlessly before the exam.

Recha Suter, representing fsmb, has discussed why planning, but also coincidences are so important for us with our Teacher of the Year 2020. Because if our Teacher of 2020 had been told as a child that he was studying chemistry and would thus be standing in front of hundreds of students as a lecturer, so successfully that they would nominate him Teacher of the Year, then he probably wouldn't have had this on his agenda.

Dr. Pascal Küpfer is our Teacher of the Year 2020! Growing up in Interlaken, he saw himself as a child in the role of a policeman or a locomotive driver, but then discovered in grammar school that he was not so averse to chemistry. He studied chemistry at the University of Berne and did his doctorate in bioorganic chemistry on a topic that he hadn't planned to do in such a way that he slipped in anyway, turned out to be a win-win situation. As a result, he occasionally took on lectures and later also found his way into teaching. Since 2016, he has been 100% active in teaching and tries to hold his lectures as he would like to have the subject explained to him.

He himself has not had a classical career following a 5-year plan and this is a good thing. He has always tried to be open to new things and is happy that things have turned out the way they did today. Therefore, he would like to tell students and graduates that ideas and plans are important, but that very often you don't end up where you saw yourself 5 years ago.

"Therefore, stay curious and be open to change, go without it and you will find your niche!"

On behalf of the entire student council, we congratulate Dr. Küpfer on his Teacher of the Year 2020!

We asked some students questions about their **experiences** with CoViD-19 and during the pandemic mainly focusing on the studies.

How was it for you to start your studies in Fall 2020?

Janis Stoffel, 1st year student: To be perfectly honest it was probably one of the biggest disappointments in my life. It really wasn't easy after having hyped my expectations during my gap year. In my opinion studying at a university doesn't just mean you study your specific field of expertise, but also that you get to enjoy the luxury of a students life; going out, getting to know new people, experience new sports, discover new interests and overall being excited to start a new chapter in life with your best mates next to you, ready for a laugh.

Unfortunately, it obviously didn't quite work out the way I or any other student hoped it would. However I'm still optimistic that we might just be able to live out our dreams and expectations during summer 2021 and going into the 3. Semester.

How were you doing in March (e.g. changes under the lockdown)?

Arlette Journeaux, 2nd year student: It was a crazy time. Suddenly, instead of lectures, we only had podcasts, which I didn't see as a particular limitation, but when all the tutorials and Fachpraktika were held online, I felt that the situation was very serious. I no longer went to Bern to live in my WG, but stayed at home in Uri and continued studying from my kitchen table. Sometimes it was very difficult to keep up the daily structure and maintain discipline, and above all I missed my colleagues from university. Nevertheless, I suddenly had a lot more time for my family and for myself and was able to slow down a bit, which was definitely positive.

As a Medicine Student, do you get asked about CoViD19 a lot? What do they ask?

Anusha Manikantan, 3rd year student: Yes of course! As the pandemic hit, I was confronted with many questions regarding CoViD-19 by friends and family. All wanted to know how the virus gets transmitted, how long one would be sick, what were the symptoms and how one could prevent the spread of the virus. Many people also enquired whether we discussed this topic in our lectures. After the initial phase of CoViD-19 and the lockdown, people were curious to know to what extent preventive measures taken were useful and whether a vaccination against the virus was in sight. Recent questions asked are doubts focused on the reliability of the vaccines, who the primary recipients should be and what the long-term effects are.

What was the biggest change for you since February?

Susan Plüss, 4th year student: *The outbreak of the Corona pandemic had a major impact on my everyday life at university. I find it a particular pity that practical lessons at the patient's bedside were cancelled, but the lack of exchange with fellow students was hard too. In addition to that, the compensation period during my studies got shortened, because, for example, the university sports programme is not offered. That's why I'm all the more pleased about attractively designed podcasts and "Ersatz-Fachpraktika" via zoom that we have during the second wave.*

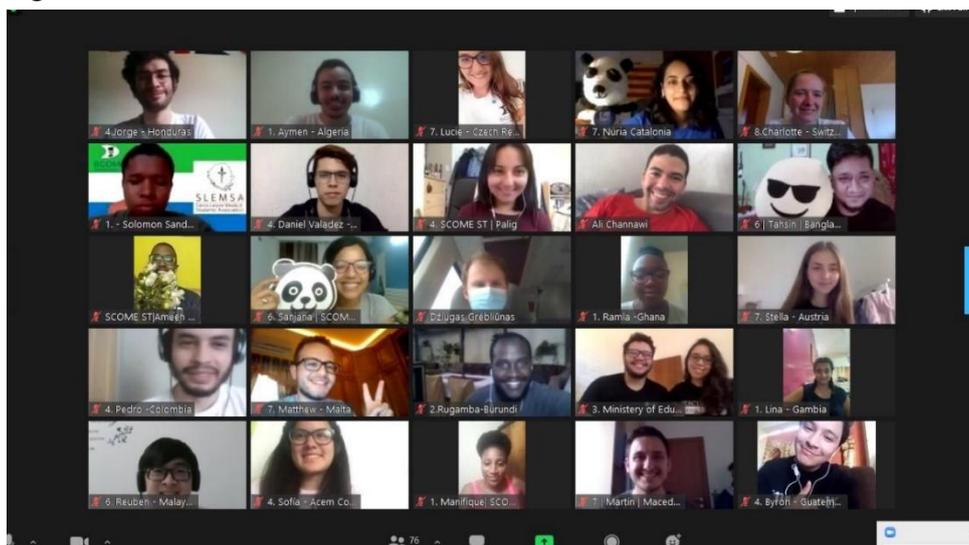
Last but not least, medical students connect on an international level. The national **swiss medical students' association (swimsa)** is a member of the international federation of Medical Students' Associations (IFMSA) and due to that every year swiss medical students are joining international events. This year a lot did not take place in person but online.

One of these online events was the General Assembly of the IFMSA and one delegate from Bern shares her experience:

August meeting 2020, I didn't know exactly what to expect. Now, after five afternoons of discussing medical education, I can safely say that my expectations were clearly exceeded. As a delegate to the Standing Committee on Medical Education (SCOME) I was extremely impressed by the worldwide commitment to more effective and relevant medical education. Zoom calls with more than 80 delegates from all regions of the world, all of them motivated to make tomorrow's medical education better, leave a lasting impression.

This motivation was particularly evident in the small working groups. Several aspects that were addressed, such as the social responsibility of universities or the politics behind medical education will certainly accompany me in the upcoming years.

Many thanks to the whole delegation who, despite the online GA, managed to experience "dance" moments together!



Picture of the Participants of the General Assembly of August 2020. in the right top corner Charlotte Kull from Bern.