

5th April 2023

Dear Parents and Guardians, copied to National Committees,

Yesterday evening I attended a student “UWC Café”, the final Café of the current 2nd year students. It was an evening of superb student performances: music, dance, good humour, all organized by a dedicated student team. The audience, comprising almost all the RBC students and several members of staff, was enthusiastic and generous. It may well be the best and most enjoyable Café I have attended in my time at RBC.

On Monday, a group of students called for a Village Meeting, which replaced the weekly Assembly, where there were hard discussions around what several perceive as a culture of making light of issues around sexual consent and related matters, with emerging demands for RBC to strengthen aspects of its policies and education in this regard. It was one of the most difficult village meetings in my time at RBC, including for the pain present in the Auditorium. It is to the credit of our students and staff that they willingly engage in such difficult conversations to help the college to grow.

From Sunday to Tuesday, RBC hosted Jake Mnookin, the Director for Partnerships and Innovation of the US Davis Scholars which is the formal programme for the philanthropy of UWC Patron Shelby Davis to UWC and our graduates. Currently, Shelby Davis is sponsoring 4 000 UWC alumni in their undergraduate studies at 99 US universities and colleges (in addition to sponsoring scholarships at all UWCs – at RBC this includes 20 students who receive “Dare to Dream” scholarships from Shelby Davis). Jake’s background is in schools, including through founding and heading a public charter school in Brooklyn, New York, for ten years, a school that grew to over 1 000 students. Jake met with a wide range of students and members of staff, as well as attending the village meeting. Afterwards, Jake wrote: It was great to have the opportunity to see RBC in action, and I appreciate speaking with so many different faculty and staff who make the magic happen. I definitely learned a lot, and particularly appreciated the opportunity to spend so much time with Hubertus (Zander, Career Counselor and Admissions Officer). You (have) an incredible school, with an incredible staff, and should be very proud.

While the 2nd year students were writing their “Mock” examinations, the 1st year students participated in a pioneering inter-disciplinary Liveable Cities of the Future Week. This is a whole week dedicated to answering the question “How can we build future cities in ways that work for the people who live in them and the planet around them?”. During the first phase of the week, students got informed and inspired through a wide range of workshops and excursions. These ranged from staff-led workshops on “City Planning from a Feminist Perspective” to visits to the local solar research institute or the municipal biogas plant. During the second phase of the week, students then worked in small groups on developing strategies for improving actual global cities the groups had been assigned. The results of this process were then presented on the final day, with students sharing the visions for their cities they had developed. These presentations took a range of creative forms, from presentations to physical city models to short theatre performances.

In addition to the academic programme, there have been many more highlights since Project Week:

Week of Feb 20th: Afro Cultures Week, organized by the Afro-community at RBC with the purpose to celebrate Afro identities and to offer a space to share, listen and learn, culminating in a wonderful Show on the Saturday evening.

Feb 22nd: Global Affairs and public event in cooperation with Carl-Schurz-Haus, including a lecture and reading by award-winning journalist Ben Mauk.

March 7th: Knitting event at the College in cooperation with Droste-Hülshof-Gymnasium, which brought together a wide range of people to RBC in a communal afternoon of knitting squares for a project supporting women in need in Freiburg.

March 17th: MUN Special Focus Day, with the keynote speech delivered by Maki Katsuno-Hayashikawa, Director of the Division for Education 2030 at UNESCO. For this event we were joined by 20 teachers from Danish schools. There also was a strong contribution by RBC alumna Isabella Tello (RBC 2019-21) who is recognized as a UN Women Rising Star 2022.

March 18th: Kultur in der Kartause with Freiburg band "Moondogs", where €1 000 was raised towards RBC's scholarships for students coming from SOS Children's Villages.

March 25th / 26th: Host Family Weekend, where students spent their second (1st years) or final weekend (2nd years) with their host families. This was the first host family weekend since the corona pandemic where we could close the campus completely. Some families hosted up to five students. We received heartwarming reports about cooking and baking sessions, trips to Breisach, Straßbourg and the Black Forest, as well as of visits to several museums and even an evening of opera.

Week of March 27th: Intersectional Feminism Special Focus Week, a student-initiated week following from the Intersectional Feminism Special Focus Day which took place last year for the first time.

April 1st: Spring Day, the Saturday morning working in Tutor Groups in different parts of the RBC gardens and grounds, followed by student-led cultural workshops, a concert, a colourful (and dye-filled) celebration of the Hindu festival of Holi and a bonfire.

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Around half of RBC's students remain on campus for the Spring Break, which starts this afternoon. The Spring Break extends through a period of deep religious significance for people of the Abrahamic religions, and I wish all well.

Lessons resume on Monday 17th April. It will be a full week. Friday 21st April is the last day of classes for the 2nd year students, after which they enter study leave for their final IB examinations. The final round interviews for the next RBC Rektor are scheduled on campus on the 20th and 21st April, with the intention that next Rektor takes up appointment in August 2024 (after each current student has graduated). Each of the candidates also will engage with a panel of students and a panel of faculty and staff. On the same days, RBC is hosting IB training workshops for European-based UWC teachers of Biology, Chemistry and Physics, a powerful opportunity for inter-UWC collaboration for faculty in these subjects. UWC Executive Director Faith Abiodun also is a planned guest during this week.

With best wishes,

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Rektor

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