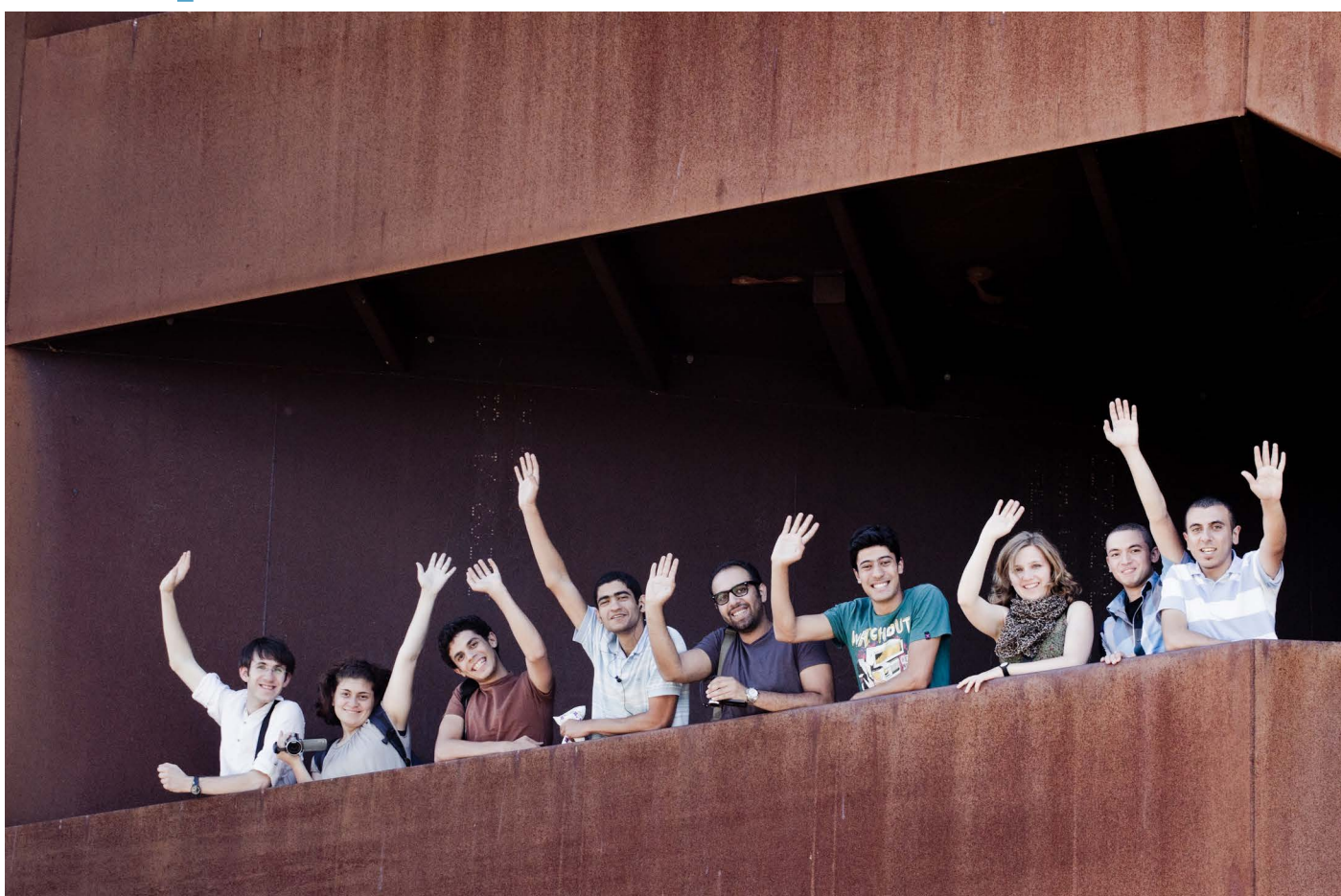




# Exchange of Student Representatives 2012



# Report on the Exchange of Student Representatives



20th – 25th June 2012, Cottbus, Germany  
4th – 8th November 2012, Alexandria, Egypt

## Cooperation Partners

University of Cairo, Egypt  
Faculty of Engineering, Architecture

University of Alexandria, Egypt  
Faculty of Fine Arts, Architecture

Brandenburg University of Technology (BTU) Cottbus, Germany  
Faculty of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Urban Planning

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Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst  
German Academic Exchange Service





## Introduction

Within the Transformation Partnership for Urban Design and Architecture in Historic City Districts it was possible to organise an Exchange of Student Representatives between the Egyptian University of Cairo and the University of Alexandria on the one hand and the German Brandenburg University of Technology in Cottbus on the other.

The aim was to exchange ideas and points of view on how to involve students into the academic self-government of the universities. Furthermore the Exchange aimed to compare the different ways of organising the communication between architecture and urban planning students in their faculties.

Since the participating universities already work together within the frame of the “Middle East Cooperation”, students from the faculties on the build environment were chosen. The most important criteria besides the language skills in English have been the involvement into student activities, committee-work and the commitment of the students on their universities.

The main focus lay on the work of the representatives. Additionally – in order to create synergies and to deepen the exchange – scientific subjects on the build environment where the topic of collective excursions. The first Exchange took place in Cottbus. Therefore 4 students from Cairo University and 3 Students from Alexandria University where invited to visit Cottbus.

To complete the Exchange, 4 students where in return invited to come to Egypt. The second Exchange was hosted from Alexandria University. In this intensive second part all Exchange Students came together once more, in order to deepen the gained experiences and to complete the comparison of the different systems.

Both Exchanges culminated in a public presentation of the outcomes: In Cottbus within the context of the Joint Research Conference and in Alexandria as opening of the final presentations of the Urban Design Workshop.







## Cottbus & Excursion to the IBA

The students got to know each other for a first time in Germany. Excursions to Berlin and into the (also architecturally) fascinating post-mining regional Lusatia, that is surrounding Cottbus, were an important start for the international team. Besides the meetings with active students from BTU in Cottbus, who reported on their committee work, all spare time was used to explain the German system. Not only was the system of academic self-governance of high interest: also Germany's and Brandenburg's history was explained in detail. With this profound knowledge on Germany's political and also architectural history, best foundations for an intensive weekend-workshop were built.

The group made an excursion into the post-mining landscape. Therefore, the headquarters of the former "International Building Exhibition (IBA) Fürst-Pückler-Land" served outstandingly as a host. Intensive group work (continuing into late hours) led to a presentation of "the German System". A first comparison with the Egyptian organisation of student representatives and their involvement into the administration of their faculties was presented later at the Joint Research Conference in Cottbus.







## Excursion to Berlin

In a day-trip to Berlin the German students presented the Capital to their guest. Main parts of the inner city with its famous buildings where visited.

The highlight of the Excursion was a meeting with Prof Neumann, the science policy spokesman of the German Liberal Party (FDP). The meeting took place in the building-complex of the Federal Government of German (Bundestag). Prof Neumann explained the federal system in Germany that is preventing the Federal Government of Germany (Bund) to fund education within the Federal States (like Brandenburg). He stressed that – in order to archive a sustainable and internationally competitive higher education system – a direct funding by the Bund is necessary.

Another major problem for Prof Neumann was the missing access to the students on a national level in Germany. Differing from Egypt, Germany's students do not have a national Student Representative.



Source: inzumi.com





## Alexandria

The second part of the Exchange took place in Alexandria, Egypt. The students at Alexandria University organised a similar programme in order to learn more about the political structures of Egypt. Many meetings with high Egyptian Student Representatives gave a deep insight into the student's activities. Furthermore, a wide range of small excursions in Alexandria helped the German students to learn more about the political and architectural history of Egypt.





Especially the meetings with the president of the Students Union of the Faculty of Fine Arts and the president of the Students Union of Alexandria University where very impressive. The Egyptian System is a lot more hierarchical than the German system – particularly because of the huge numbers of students in the big Egyptian Universities. Another unique opportunity was the meeting with the dean of the Faculty of Fine Arts at Alexandria University.

First ideas on improving the participation of students in the academic self-government at Universities in Egypt and Germany where discussed with the different representatives.

The second part of the Exchange made the picture on the different structures complete. Having learned about both - the German System and the Egyptian System - it was now possible to draw an extensive comparison.

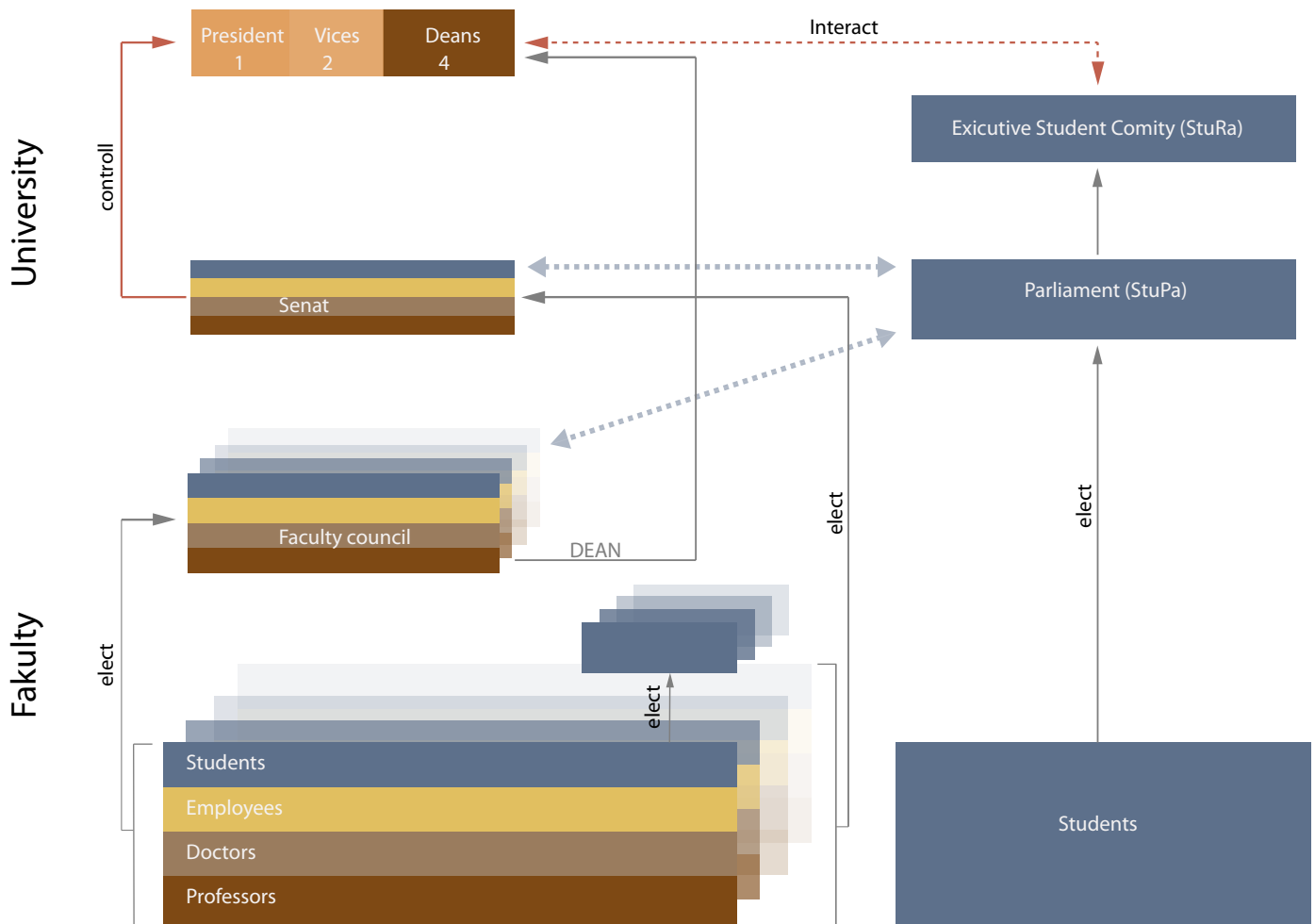


## Conclusion

In a final presentation, the German students now summed up, what they had learned in Egypt. Based on the presentation of the Germany system back in Cottbus, both Systems were presented at the opening of the final presentations of the Urban Design Workshop in Alexandria.

The administrative structures of Faculties and the Universities were explained to the audience. Furthermore, structure and organisation of student activities were compared. Then, the focus was put on the relationship of those two. Institutional connections between students and the administration as well as ways of communication were highlighted.

## German System



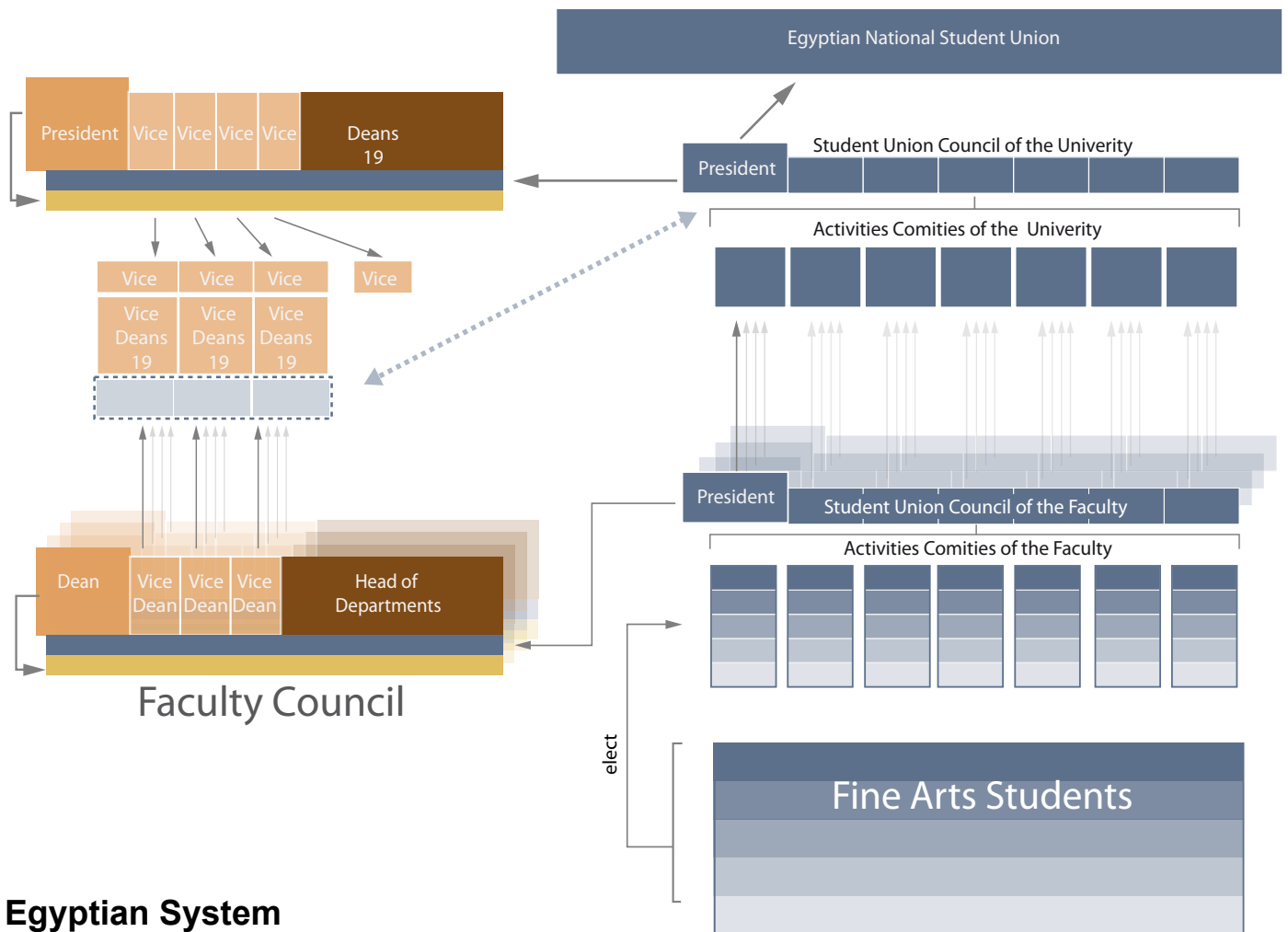
The Germany System has an institutionalised participation of students in almost all committees. Faculty Council and Senate have got a student member. Additionally, the students have got a Student Parliament (StuPa in Cottbus) and an Executive Student Committee (StuRa). They act on a University-wide level and do not have an equivalent on the national scale.

Problematic on this kind of organisation is that there are parallel committees on the same level. Different students have to communicate in order to represent the same ideas or opinions of their students.

A Best Practise of the German system is the Exam Committee with students represented in it. The Committee is subject-related, improves the everyday-communication between students and professors and it is quite powerful.

Another good idea is the Evaluation of the teachers. On the one hand it can be very useful for quality insurance of the teaching, though it is on the other hand heavily depending on the motivation of the professors (working very good in some cases at the BTU Cottbus).





## Egyptian System

The Egyptian system profits off a very enthusiastic commitment of the students. The Egyptian students manage to motivate their fellow students with many actions and events to participate.

Adding a link between the administration and the Student Union at Egyptian Universities could improve the cooperation and coordination. Furthermore, Student Representatives could be added in the existing administration structures.

## Participants

All in all, the Exchange of Student Representatives 2012 was an enormous success. Both sides have learned a lot about each other and long-lasting friendships have been founded. The Exchange helped to get a better understanding of each other and supported the collaboration of all participants.

### University of Cairo/Giza, Faculty of Engineering

Mr. Mohamed Abo Sira  
 Mr. Mohamed Ali  
 Mr. Mohamed Khaled  
 Mr. Ahmed Sobhy

### Alexandria University, Faculty of Fine Arts

Mr. Abdelrahman Mohamed Abdelrahman Abdelmotaleb Ibrahim  
 Ms. Ghada Essam Sayed Ahmed Mustafa Allam  
 Mr. Mohammad Ahmed Mahmoud Abdelkhalek

### University of Cottbus, Faculty of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Urban Planning

Mr. Christoph Kollert  
 Mr. Felix Schaub  
 Mr. Moritz Mechtel  
 Ms. Sandra Izabela Lysakowska