

**2023 DAAD Alumni Association USA Winter Newsletter  
November 2023**

**Welcome Letter by DAAD-AA President Mechthild Schmidt Feist**

Welcome DAAD Alumni USA Members,

We wish you a Peaceful Holiday Season and a Happy New Year 2024!

This wish may come across as cynical given the many human-caused tragedies we witness. Yet, it is my fervent belief that exchange between countries with personal contacts has long been one successful way to understand and appreciate other human beings. Knowing another culture avoids misinterpretations and lets us gain a new perspective of our own way of life. I hope we can elect wise leaders that do not gamble with any life, here or abroad.

For our organization it has been a very good year. We have updated our Social Media channels with a focus on [LinkedIn](#) - but are still present on [Facebook](#). Since mid-year we have our own website ([www.daad-alumni-usa.org](http://www.daad-alumni-usa.org)) - while maintaining our presence in the wider DAAD network site. We have been very successful in promoting our events - ( please read the summaries in this letter!). Our LinkedIn membership has more than tripled. Please help us reach our goal of 500 by the end of the year and [connect with us](#) in order to be informed about all of our upcoming events!

We are deeply appreciative of the support we have received from you, our Alumni and friends of the DAAD. Your generosity enables us to provide academic opportunities for a future generation of students and to organize events that enable the DAAD Alumni to meet and network with one another. With your help we can increase the number of students we can send for a SUMMER RESEARCH or STUDY grant. Read about our first RISE Scholarship panel to see the difference your support is making. We also have a podcast for you to listen to. For around \$3000 we give undergraduate students the opportunity for a life-changing experience. Ten of our members can pool funds and send [ONE MORE STUDENT. Please pay it forward!](#) Academic exchange is an investment in the future.

If you are a member and a DAAD alumnus/alumna we would love to hear YOUR exchange story. Write us at [giving@Daad-Alumni-USA.org](mailto:giving@Daad-Alumni-USA.org) - to discuss how you can participate.

We are counting on you to [maintain your membership](#) in the DAAD Alumni Association USA. Our board members work in many professions and we maintain several geographical hubs with local events. Our partnerships with like-minded organizations also give you access to their events. Connect, attend our events virtually or in person. Please Read about the upcoming 2024 DAAD Sound Understanding Concert in the next chapter!

Wishing you health and happiness for the coming year,



Mechthild Schmidt Feist

## What you find in this issue:

Welcome to the 2023 year-end edition of our newsletter. In this newsletter you will read about our RISE grantees, our events, initiatives and welcome new board members. My thanks go to our very active board members who organize and promote our events, staff the selection committees for our grants and awards, improve and maintain our communication structures. As customary, our Vice President takes over the presidency for two years, and I am happy that Dr. Manfred Philipp will take the lead in 2014, with Vice President Ingo Brachmann in his team. Manfred was president once before, ten years ago.

I want to focus on our young grantees. If you have limited time, please start there. The students are thankful that you decided to fund their exposure to research and a new culture. You can already see the effect on their academic career and personal relationships. My thanks go to you, our members – in the hope that you will be able to repeat your support for the very deserving next group of students that we will choose this spring. Every \$3,000 donation funds one more student!

Please know that we all work *pro bono* so that all funds can go to grants and supporting events. We are a USA 501 (c 4) not-for-profit organization and your contributions are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law. We are proud to have earned a [Gold Seal from Candid/Guidestar](#) for our financial transparency and trustworthiness!

Please mark your calendar for our inaugural 2024 Award event in Manhattan on Wednesday, April 17 (see more on that in the Epilogue below – and a [quick link to tickets](#) here) and our 2024 Sound Understanding Concert on April 18, 2024 at 7pm, Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall showcasing Germany's talented musicians and DAAD fellowship recipients.

To place an ad in the concert program or make a donation, please go to the [concert webpage](#) section: "Other Ways to Support this Event" and send the form to Amra Dumisic at the DAAD NY office: [dumisic@daad.de](mailto:dumisic@daad.de). Any [donation](#) over \$100 will be acknowledged in the program of the Sound Understanding Concert if received before the March 4 printing deadline.

Enjoy the read!

Mechthild Schmidt Feist



## **DAAD Alumni Association USA Excellence Award for International Exchange 2023**

By Sigrid Berka

We were honored to present this year's DAAD Alumni USA Excellence Award for International Exchange to Dr. John Torpey, Director of the European Union Studies Center of the CUNY Graduate Center, for his accomplishments.

*(Photo: Dr. Torpey received the Award at the Sound Understanding Concert by Vice President Manfred Philipp on April 20th, 2023 in Carnegie Hall. photo credit B.Sheehan for DAAD)*

Professor Torpey, Presidential Professor of Sociology and History and Director of the Ralph Bunche Institute for International Studies (RBI) at the CUNY Graduate Center, has been working on scholarly and academic exchange between US/Germany with consistent sustained engagement over time since the 1980s. He received distinguished scholarships from prestigious funding

organizations such as DAAD, Fulbright, Marshall Fund, SSRC, Monet, IREX. He has mentored the younger generation US PhD students in Political Science through his Transatlantic summer workshops for PhDs in history, art history, social sciences jointly with Ruhr University Bochum (2015-2020). His knowledge of German, and his interest in contemporary German topics is a theme running throughout his professional career as his research shows beginning with his Dissertation research on "Intellectuals, Socialism, and Dissent in the GDR" at the FU Berlin during 1990-1991 and several ensuing publications dealing with Germany, EU issues, and the US. John Torpey is a Fellow in the German-American Academic Council (GAAC)-SSRC and has run Summer Institutes on Immigration, Integration, and Citizenship, both at the New School for Social Research in NYC and in Berlin. He was a Distinguished Fulbright Professor in American Studies at the University of Graz in Austria.



**The DAAD AA USA Mid-Career Award** went to Lauren Davis, HS teacher at Clements HS, Sugar Land, TX.

Ms. Davis shows excellent engagement, initiative, preparation and drive for recruiting and retaining HS students for German language and culture! She is an educator passionate about proficiency-based instruction and assessment. Active in facilitating bilateral exchange between Germany and the US at both community and institutional levels, she has won several teaching awards, e.g. the AATG German Embassy Teacher of Excellence! She is motivated through her own HS exchange program (GAPP) as a young HS student which she now continues to run with a Gymnasium in

Bonn for her students. She gives to the younger generation what was decisive for her own career as a teacher of German. She has gone above and beyond what most HS teachers do for their students.

*Image courtesy of Ms. Davis' LinkedIn page*

## How to Nominate an Awardee for the Awards for Excellence in International Exchange

Dear Alumni, Dear Colleague:

We are writing to you to ask you to help us identify individuals deserving one of two special awards the DAAD AA gives out annually.

The DAAD AA is pleased to recognize Excellence in the International Exchange between the USA and Germany with a special award that are presented annually to someone who has demonstrated an outstanding commitment to academic and cultural exchange between Germany and the USA, who has promoted in exemplary ways the interchange of scholarly and cultural ideas between Germany and the US, and who has been an advocate and active participant in the scholarly and cultural exchange of ideas between our two countries. In addition, we would like to recognize active engagement in the procurement of funds for DAAD AA scholarships. This is a Senior career level award.

We are also delighted to be able to offer a second award: The Mid-Career Professional Award for Accomplishments in International Education between the USA and Germany. Here we are looking for a colleague who shows an exemplary record of accomplishment in having led outstanding exchange programs, e.g., having participated in faculty/high school teacher/ student exchanges, having created transatlantic or international internship opportunities for students, having led fundraising efforts for exchanges and scholarships, and/or having engaged in community outreach or support programs of partner city programs, or chamber of commerce exchanges. The awardee should show potential and future “promise” in his/her professional international trajectory.

Our members can nominate a highly deserving candidate. Please send a letter of nomination and an updated CV or resume of the nominee to Sigrid Berka, sigrid\_berka@uri.edu by December 20<sup>th</sup>. Self nominations are accepted. A jury will vote for one senior and one mid-career professional award.

Sigrid Berka

Excellence Awards chair, DAADAA USA

## DAAD Alumni Scholarship Awardees 2023 –

By Susanne Rott

Through the donations of DAAD Alumni we were able to award four scholarships to outstanding students to participate in three-month long internships in Germany through the DAAD Research Internships in Science and Engineering (RISE) Program.

**Mia Schwartz** (University of Minnesota) worked on tasks Examining clogging and countermeasures in aquifer thermal energy storage systems (ATES) at the Technische Universität Bergakademie Freiberg , **Kamilla Haidaienko** (Sewanee: The University of the South) worked on Urban Livability as a way to endorse Climate Change Adaptation in Certification Systems for neighborhoods at the HafenCity University Hamburg, **Aaron Guerra** (UC Davis) collaborated on Sensing soil nitrogen dynamics in spatially and temporally diversified cropping systems at the Leibnitz Centre for Agricultural Landscape Research, and **Yelizaveta Stretovich** (UC San Diego) participated in the Building Information Modeling (BIM) for Energy-Efficient Building Operations project at the Hochschule für Technik und Wirtschaft Berlin.

The four interns are extremely grateful to the DAAD Alumni Association’s support for this life-changing experience. They shared their invaluable work experiences as researchers in international teams and their culturally rich encounters living in Germany in their reports. Below are a few highlights from their time in Germany.



**Mia Schwarz** (University of Minnesota) at the Technische Universität Bergakademie Freiberg

I learned many applicable technical skills which I plan to use as I complete my bachelor’s thesis this year, as well as in my future graduate studies. In addition to the research skills I acquired, I also made many valuable connections with my coworkers. One of my favorite parts of the day was our lunch break, where coworkers would gather in the meeting room and talk casually. Around half of my coworkers were from Germany, and the rest were from other countries in Europe, South America, Africa, and Asia. My German coworkers were very happy to enlighten me about German and Saxon culture, and often spoke German with me to improve my German language skills.

**Yelizaveta Stretovich** (UC San Diego) at the Hochschule für Technik und Wirtschaft Berlin

I learned a great deal about Building Information System and Facility Management and how it can be



used to enhance buildings energy efficiency. Additionally, I discovered a master's program co-directed by my advisor, which I am now considering for my future academic pursuits. I feel incredibly fortunate to have met some truly amazing people during my internship. I created unforgettable memories both at work and while traveling with bright, funny, and down-to-earth fellow interns. The opportunity to hop on a train and travel just a few hours in any direction, arriving in a new country to experience its culture, savor new foods, observe different lifestyles, hear another language, delve into history, and realize the vast world awaiting exploration, learning, and discovery – it’s truly remarkable.

The DAAD AA Scholarships are made possible through your financial support. Currently we are able to contribute four scholarships annually, but we have the goal of providing four more. Please consider a donation that will support additional student scholarships in 2024! You can donate by: [Paypal](#), Zelle & email: [giving@daad-alumni-usa.org](mailto:giving@daad-alumni-usa.org), or by check, payable to: DAAD AA Treasurer, 18601 Darnestown Rd., Poolesville, MD 20837

### Student Roundtable about RISE Internship Experiences

By Susanne Rott



On October 23, 2023, DAAD AA hosted its inaugural roundtable discussion featuring four accomplished RISE (Research Internships in Science and Engineering) participants. **Yelizaveta Stretovich (Civil Engineering)**, **Mia Schwarz (Geology)**, **Langcheng Gong (Biology)**, and **Emily Bangston (Environmental Studies)** graciously shared invaluable insights into their respective research endeavors, as well as their experiences navigating life and culture in Germany. The engaging hour-long session, conducted on Zoom, welcomed an attentive audience of 35 students from across the country. The event served as a knowledge-sharing platform, equipping prospective applicants with essential tips on the application process, strategies for maximizing a three-month research internship in Germany, and an understanding of why a RISE internship stands out as a transformative and career-enriching opportunity.

## Host Science and Engineering Interns from Germany

Reflecting on the enriching experiences you've gained through your involvement in research projects at German universities, it is evident that cultural and research exchanges are transformative, fostering lifelong collaborations and friendships. As you value the benefits of these experiences as DAAD alumni, we invite you to consider hosting a DAAD funded German intern in your research lab. [RISE Worldwide](#), a program offering paid summer research internships to undergraduate students from Germany, focuses on diverse academic fields, including biology, chemistry, computer science, physics, earth sciences, engineering, and related disciplines. The advantages for both students and U.S. researchers and institutions are numerous, as highlighted in the insightful [reports](#) by German students. While the deadline for the summer 2024 session has passed, we encourage you to consider planning for the future. Mark your calendar for the fall of 2024, when you can post an internship opportunity for the summer of 2025.

## Board News

Our Board members are elected for a 3-year turn, with an option for one renewal before taking a hiatus. We are thanking Helena Kane Finn, Mechthild Schmidt Feist, and Anne MacLachlan for their 6 years of service. They will take the mandatory hiatus but are available for consultation.

We are happy that our 2023 hiatus members Rosmarie Morewedge and Mark W. Rectanus will rejoin and contribute to the institutional history of their longtime dedication to the board.

I am happy to introduce our new board members who joined us in 2023:



### **Dr. Hartmut Grossmann**

Born and raised in Hamburg, Germany. After military service, study of law at the University of Hamburg (First and second state exam as well as doctorate). Study of law at the University of California at Berkeley as a DAAD scholarship recipient (LL.M). Professional career as counsel at the World Bank, Washington, D.C., then mostly in financial services as Chief Operating Officer and General Counsel at Dresdner Bank North America for 20 years and thereafter in a number of capacities at an investment management firm (Offit Hall), AIG and Goldman. Currently semi-retired. Long standing member of the American Council on Germany (twice participant in Young Leader Conferences). Active in civic matters in Hoboken, NJ, where he resides.



### **Dr. John Torpey**

John Christopher Torpey is an American academic, sociologist, and historian best known for his scholarship on the state, identity, and contemporary politics (Wikipedia). Professor Torpey, Presidential Professor of Sociology and History and Director of the Ralph Bunche Institute for International Studies (RBI) at the CUNY Graduate Center, has been working on scholarly and academic exchange between US/Germany with consistent sustained engagement over time since the 1980s. (more under 'John's Excellence Award' - above)



### **Kristina Yu**

Kristina H. Yu is full Professor at the [University of New Mexico](#). She has been part of the School of Architecture + Planning faculty since 2007. At UNM, Yu pursues research and teaching opportunities in the areas of design, architecture and technology. She is principal with McCLAIN+YU Architecture & Design. Her research centralizes the technical implementation of renewable systems in complex building types for its most appropriate syntheses. She has practiced design and architecture widely in Chicago, Boston, New York, Berlin, Frankfurt, Austin.

Education: M Arch, [Harvard University Graduate School of Design](#),  
B Arch [Illinois Institute of Technology](#)

## **More Events 2023 | A Retrospective**

This short listing of our sponsored events has links to our more extensive LinkedIn posts. While we are glad to be back in person for local events, we like the opportunity to reach a much wider audience with online or hybrid events and hope to see you there as well. To share with the larger community, we co-sponsor a number of events.

For a better social media presence, we began a new LinkedIn group. Some of you have already joined us there. We announce events to our members on [Facebook](#) and mainly on [LinkedIn](#).

**Restarting the Fulbright Program in Hong Kong and China**, A Zoom conversation with Glenn Shive, Former Director of the Hong Kong-America Center, Mary Brown Bullock, Agnes Scott College, & Stanley N. Katz, Princeton University. Moderated by Manfred Philipp. Friday, November 17 at 6 AM in Hong Kong, Taipei and Beijing. Thursday, November 16 at 2 PM Pacific, 5 PM Eastern, & 11 PM Central European Time. [Please see the flier](#). The YouTube video is in preparation.

The DAAD Alumni Association Roundtable Discussion, **Exploring the Value of Internships in Germany**: From Learning to Career Success, with Mia Schwartz, Aaron Guerra, Yelizaveta Stretovich, Emily Bangston and Langcheng Gong. Moderated by Susanne Rott. Zoom on Oct 23, 2023, 5 PM EST

**Advocating Empathy and Reconciliation in the Midst of Conflict**, Mohamed Dajani Daoudi, Formerly Professor of Political Science, Al-Quds University, Founder of the Wasatia Movement, and recipient of Austria's Simon Wiesenthal Award for Civic Engagement to Combat Anti-Semitism. Daoudi spoke at the CUNY Graduate Center, 7:30 PM, Thursday, September 21, 2023. Flier for the event.

**The Transatlantic Alumni Conference (TAC)**, June 23-25, 2023, in Erfurt, Germany. TAC represents six German-American exchange alumni associations: DAAD Alumni USA, German Fulbright Alumni Association (FAeV), Parlamentarisches Patenschafts-Programms (PPP), North American Bundestag Network (NABN), PPP Alumni, CBYX Alumni Association (CBYXAA)  
The speakers included Amy Gutman, the US Ambassador to Germany, Kira Vinke, Head of Center for Climate and Foreign Policy at the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik, and Mechthild Schmidt Feist, who spoke about our alumni association. See [LinkedIn](#) and <https://www.gaa-network.org/>

**Freiburg im Nationalsozialismus**. A Film Documentary and Discussion with UCF Student Carla Mallmann, Thursday, May 25, 2023. See the [Flier](#).

The 2023 DAAD **Sound Understanding Concert**, Carnegie Hall, April 20, 2023. The DAAD-AA Award for Excellence in International Exchange was given to John Torpey, Director of the European Union Studies Center of the CUNY Graduate Center.

**Germany and Europe Facing the Ukraine War.** April 19, 2023. A lecture given by Consul General David Gill which was hosted by John Torpey of the European Union Studies Center. Please see the [YouTube version](#).

**A Memorial Service for Dietrich Bonhoeffer**, April 16, 2023, an in-person event that replaced an event that was canceled due to the pandemic, originally scheduled on the 75th Anniversary of Bonhoeffer's Execution by the Nazis. Greenville Community Church, Scarsdale, New York. Contributions by German Consul-General David Gill and professors Dr. Gary Dorrien, Dr. Mary Ellen Schmider and Dr. Reggie Williams. The pianist was Marc Lohse. Organized by Manfred Philipp and Pastor Samuel Clover. More: [the flier](#) and [YouTube video](#), [statement](#) from Rev. Ueli Greminger, retired pastor at St. Peter's Church, Zurich, Switzerland, -[bulletin](#) for the service, and [event description](#) . Remarks by former US Ambassador to Germany and former US National Security Advisor Richard Grenell, [are posted here](#).

**Heidegger in Ruins**, on Thursday, 8 PM Eastern on February 9, 2023 at the CUNY Graduate Center, also on Zoom. A dialog between Prof. Richard Wolin. Distinguished Professor, the CUNY Graduate Center, and Martin Jay, the Sidney Hellman Ehrman Professor of History, Emeritus, at the University of California, Berkeley. Via Zoom. Hosted by Manfred Philipp. The YouTube video is [available here](#).

**Shades of Blue: Claiming Europe in the Age of Disintegration.** A Panel Discussion | January 24 | Panelist/Discussants: Gregor Feindt, Leibniz-Institute of European History, Mainz; Félix Krawatzek, Center for East European and International Studies, Berlin; Friedemann Pestel, University of Freiburg/University of California, Berkeley; Rieke Trimcev, University of Greifswald  
Sponsors: [Institute of European Studies](#), [German Historical Institute Washington | Pacific Office Berkeley](#), [Institute of Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies \(ISEEES\)](#), [Department of Political Science](#)

### **Epilogue – and yes, we hope – and thank you - for your support**

Dear Reader, Thank you for following our activities! We hope you renew your membership, invite fellow alumni friends to join our network. Maybe we will see some of you at our April concert, at Carnegie Hall, New York City on April 18, 2024! For updates during the year, follow us on [LinkedIn](#) or [Facebook](#) or check on our website: [daad-alumni-usa.org](http://daad-alumni-usa.org)

We hope the student testimonials or also your own cultural and academic exchanges will encourage you to help support a student for a 2024 Summer grant.



Use the payment method of your choice: [Paypal](#), Zelle with email: [giving@daad-alumni-usa.org](mailto:giving@daad-alumni-usa.org) or by [check](#), Please find membership tiers on our website. Benefits include invitations to DAAD and Alumni events, the option to nominate an award candidate, and the opportunity to represent us at academic events.

Wir wünschen der Welt ein friedliches Miteinander und hoffen, dass unsere Arbeit ein wenig dazu beitragen wird!

*The Board of the DAAD Alumni Association USA*



**Before we go, here is a preview for upcoming 2024 events:**

- Wednesday, April 17, 2024 at 6 PM in Manhattan. Please mark your calendar for an event honoring the first two people to receive the

*DAAD Alumni Association Awards for **Lifetime Achievement in International Exchange.***

One award will go to **Dr. Allan Goodman**, President of the [Institute for International Education](#), which runs the Gilman-DAAD program, the Fulbright Program, and many others. The second award for Lifetime Achievement in International Exchange will go to **Prof. Mary Ellen Schmider**, former President and Executive Director of the Fulbright Association. Prof. Schmider was President of the Fulbright Association when it gave the [Fulbright Prize for International Understanding](#) to Chancellor Angela Merkel. In addition, our inaugural DAAD-AA award for **Outstanding Achievements in Fostering Transatlantic Relations** will go to **David Gill**, Consul General of Germany in New York. He was a former German State Secretary and Head of Office for Joachim Gauck, then the President of Germany.

– see the invite below.

- Thursday, April 18, 2024 at 7pm, **the 2024 DAAD Sound Understanding Concert**, Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall will be showcasing some of Germany's most talented musicians and DAAD grantees. (More information and concert program ad opportunities above on page 2)

**Wednesday, April 17, 2024, at 6:30 PM**

**We invite you to help us honor**



**Allan Goodman**

Chief Executive Officer of the Institute for International Education, with the **Lifetime Achievement Award for International Exchange**. Dr. Goodman will be introduced by Benedikt Brisch of the German Academic Exchange Service.

**Mary Ellen Heian Schmider**

Former President and Executive Officer of the Fulbright Association, with the **Lifetime Achievement Award for International Exchange**. Dr. Schmider will be introduced by Nancy Neill, past President of of the Fulbright Association.

**David Gill**

Consul General of Germany in New York former State Secretary and Head of Office for the German Federal President, with the **Award for Outstanding Achievements in Fostering Transatlantic Relations**. Consul General Gill will be introduced by Steven E. Sokol, President of the American Council on Germany.

A buffet and social hour will precede the presentation of awards.

**[Please click here](#) in order to register at the discounted member rate.**



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