

# TRANSATLANTIC RUHR FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

July 27 - September 22, 2024





<https://photos.com/photos/buildings-city-illuminated-2699520/>

# Dear Fellows, Friends and Partners,

It gives me great pleasure to share with you this year's cohort and highlight their impressive internships. Our 2024 fellows are from our three universities: Ruhr University Bochum, TU Dortmund University, and University of Duisburg-Essen. They bring their diverse backgrounds and experiences to the New York and Washington DC metropolitan areas gaining practical insights and experiences at our host organizations.

The Transatlantic Ruhr Fellowship Program is dedicated to fostering global collaboration, enhancing academic and professional skills, and building lifelong connections between our fellows and the US region. This program is a testament to our commitment to internationalization and the promotion of cross-cultural understanding. We are

incredibly proud of our 2024 fellows and are confident that their time in the United States will be transformative.

This year we will be placing fellows at: DFG German Research Foundation New York and Washington DC, DWIH German Center for Research and Innovation New York, German American Chamber of Commerce, Goethe-Institut and GAPP, KAO Group, Lafayette College's Office of Sustainability, NYC Civic Engagement Commission, and the Society of Illustrators at the Museum of Illustration.

The #TRF2024 is hosted in close cooperation between the UA Ruhr North America office, the German American Chamber of Commerce and Lehigh University where the fellows will spend one-week developing and sharpening their entrepreneurial mindset.

UA Ruhr is sincerely grateful to DAAD – German Academic Exchange Service for their ongoing support of the fellowship program through the promos scholarship. We invite you to learn more about our fellows' journeys and the companies they are interning at in the following pages. Please see our website and social media platforms for the impact of our program.

More information is available on our fellowship website:



Please feel free to connect with our New York office for further information.

With best wishes,

Priya S. Nayar



Priya S. Nayar  
Executive Director  
UA Ruhr North America, New York



RUHR  
UNIVERSITÄT  
BOCHUM **RUB**

**tu** technische universität  
dortmund

UNIVERSITÄT  
DUISBURG  
ESSEN

*Open-Minded*

# University Alliance Ruhr

The academic hub for research, teaching, studying, and networking in Germany's vibrant Ruhr area

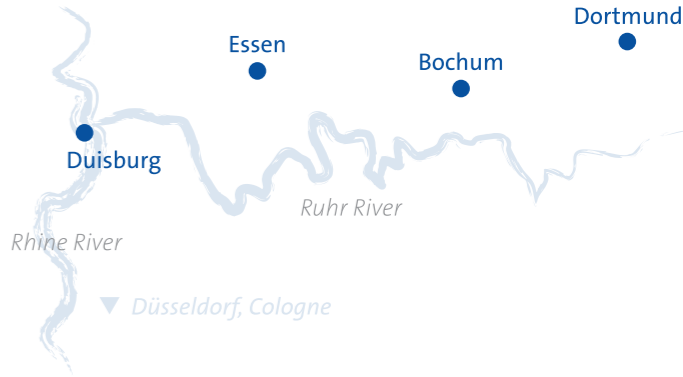
The University Alliance Ruhr is an alliance between Ruhr University Bochum, TU Dortmund University, and the University of Duisburg-Essen, the three largest universities in Germany's thriving Ruhr area. Each of our institutions has a strong tradition of breaking down walls between disciplines. We believe in the benefits of collaboration on all levels of scholarship and research, which is one of the reasons we came together in this unique university alliance.

More than 120,000 students, of which 19,000 are international, as well as over 14,000 researchers study and work within the UA Ruhr universities.

Together, the three universities have 850 partnerships with universities in over 130 countries, which provides our students and researchers with virtually unlimited possibilities for exchange and resources for development. To support our already strong global network of international exchange and collaboration, UA Ruhr has also created academic liaison offices for North America and Eastern Europe/Central Asia.

The Ruhr area is not only Germany's largest academic hub, but also an epicenter of innovation that fosters close interaction between academia and the private sector – and our alliance provides students and researchers from around the world with an open gateway to our region.

We invite you to learn more about the UA Ruhr alliance and our universities, and we look forward to welcoming you in the Ruhr area soon!



https://pixabay.com/photos/grand-central-station-new-york-4630186/



# Who's Who



**Georg Bechtold**  
DFG



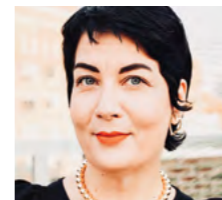
**Stacy Burger**  
Lehigh University



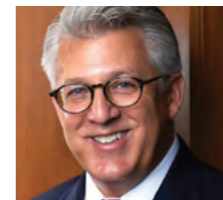
**Julia Helmes**  
DWIH NY



**Ajkuna Hoppe**  
GAPP



**Sandy Jones**  
GACC NY



**Scott Koerwer**  
Lehigh University



**Margarete Lamb-Faffelberger**  
Lafayette College



**Arabelle Liepold**  
Society of Illustrators



**Lindsay Compton**  
Society of Illustrators



**Dana Cowlshaw**  
DFG NY



**Jan Luedert**  
DWIH NY



**Cheryl Matherly**  
Lehigh University



**Delicia Nahman**  
Lafayette College



**Priya S. Nayar**  
UA Ruhr



**Eduardo Rodriguez**  
Lehigh University



**Oscar Romero**  
NYC Civic Engagement Commission



**Irene Fuchs**  
GACC NY



**Vanessa Hajduga**  
UA Ruhr



**Bettina Schuffert**  
DFG DC



**Jörg Schumacher**  
Goethe-Institut NY



**Michael Senra**  
Lafayette College



**Lindsay Stricker**  
KAO USA Inc.

# Participants



Elif Bayat



Hannah Böckmann



Richard Brandt



Lea Maren Rebecca Hoerdemann

**Elif Bayat**  
*DFG DC*

Elif is currently working as a Graduate Research Assistant in Educational Sciences at the University of Duisburg-Essen. Previously, she earned a Bachelor's degree in Sociology and Political Science from Goethe University Frankfurt, with study abroad experiences in Paris, Istanbul, and as a Fulbright Scholar in San Antonio, TX. Elif represented Germany as a delegate at the G20 Youth Summit in India and participated in the 28<sup>th</sup> UN Climate Conference. She has worked at the German Bundestag, the Goethe-Institut in Cairo, and the Permanent Mission of Germany to the UN in New York. Elif Bayat will complete her Fellowship in Science Diplomacy at the German Research Foundation in Washington, D.C.

**Hannah Böckmann**  
*DWIH NY*

Hannah Böckmann is currently studying work, organizational and business psychology in her final master's semester at Ruhr-University Bochum. Her interests are primarily in the field of human-technology/human-robot interaction and user experience. In addition to her studies, she is a board member of the student consultancy Campus for Company e.V. and works as a scientific student assistant at the Institute of Work Science in Bochum. She values intercultural exchange, which is reflected in her six-month backpacking trip through New Zealand and her semester abroad at the University of Padova in Italy. Hannah is very excited to gain both professional and personal experience in the U.S.

**Richard Brandt**  
*GACC NY*

Richard Brandt is an academic researcher at the Institute of Journalism and the Erich Brost Institute for International Journalism at TU Dortmund University. Since 2023, he is part of an EU-wide training program of journalism students. He holds a B.A. in Economic Policy Journalism from TU Dortmund University and is currently completing the Master's program Economics & Journalism. Richard works as a freelance journalist for the German business magazine FOCUS-MONEY and the German public broadcaster WDR, among others. He gained journalistic experience through internships at various local and regional newspapers as well as public broadcasters.

**Lea Maren Rebecca Hoerdemann**  
*DFG NY*

After school, Lea Maren Rebecca Hoerdemann trained as an industrial saleswoman. She then completed her bachelor's degree in business psychology and is currently studying for a Master's degree in Business Psychology. Alongside her studies, she has worked in various organizations, including waste management, banking, and the food industry. She is currently writing her Master's thesis in the field of team processes and AI.

# Participants

(continued)



Karina Kaidarova



Karoline Kaimer



Johanna Lehnert



Fabian Klaps

## **Karina Kaidarova** *NYC CEC*

Karina Kaidarova is a final-year bachelor student in Sales Engineering and Product Management at Ruhr-University Bochum. Originally from Kazakhstan, she embarked on her academic journey in Germany through the Goethe-Institut's Study Bridge Program. Her specialization is "Machine and Automation Systems". Currently, she works at WILO in Data Management, where she gains experience in data-driven decision-making and cross-cultural project management. As a personal project, she is also developing a mobile app with her team, which originated from the Female Academic Entrepreneurs seminar. The app is designed to help women adapt their training plans based on their menstrual cycles.

## **Karoline Kaimer** *Society of Illustrators*

Karoline Kaimer is an M.A. student in American Studies as well as Literature and Media Practice at the University of Duisburg-Essen. For one of her extra curricula during her Master's program, she participated in a creative writing workshop at Palacký University Olomouc, Czech Republic. On a study trip to Brooklyn, she shot her latest film for Literature and Media Practice, focusing on the Poetry Map on Coney Island by Parachute Literary Arts. Karoline's passion for the moving image and television was previously demonstrated during her employment at the WDR Studio in Essen. She is looking forward to gaining professional work experience in a creative non-profit environment in Manhattan.

## **Johanna Lehnert** *NYC CEC*

Johanna Lehnert is in the final stages of her Master's program in American Studies and German Studies at the University of Duisburg-Essen. Over the past semesters, she has gained international experience as a student in Greece and as an intern in Denmark. Johanna is a co-founder of the newsletter at her institute and actively advocates for her fellow students' interests as a student representative. Outside of her academic pursuits, she volunteers at an organization dedicated to equal opportunities, where she particularly supports young people with migrant backgrounds in the education system. Looking ahead, she aspires to continue working in the field of social justice and inclusion.

## **Fabian Klaps** *KAO USA Inc.*

Fabian Klaps has a Bachelor's degree in Information Systems, and is currently in the final year of his Master's degree in Business & Economics with majoring in Digitalization & Entrepreneurship at TU Dortmund University. In addition to his studies, Fabian was able to shape his profile in multinational industrial and consulting companies, specializing in digital innovation. Fabian is involved in extracurricular student initiatives such as a leading German student consultancy and a local venture club. Among other things, Fabian gained his first hands-on entrepreneurial experience by organizing local student events in 2023. This summer, Fabian will be completing an internship at Kao USA Inc. in New York City.

# Participants

(continued)



David Schupp



Patrick Sobbe



Alisea Joline Wigger

## David Schupp

*Goethe-Institut NYC*

David Schupp is a Master's student in Social Sciences with a focus on Anthropology & Science and Technology Studies at Ruhr-University Bochum. He completed his Bachelor's degree in Governance and Public Policy at the University of Passau.

At Ruhr-University Bochum, he is actively involved in the student-led initiative BIPOC denken and is a member of the University Commission for Diversity, Talent Development, and Inclusion. In addition to his studies, David works as a project manager at Vielfaltsprojekte GmbH, a consultancy specializing in diversity, equity, and inclusion. He enjoys traveling and frequently attends contemporary art exhibitions and theater performances.

## Patrick Sobbe

*Lafayette College*

Patrick Sobbe is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Industrial Engineering at TU Dortmund University, specializing in Management of Electrical Systems. He spent his first Master's semester abroad in Sweden, fostering international experience. Patrick is passionate about energy technology, particularly the generation, distribution, and marketing of renewable energy sources. He gained valuable insights through various internships, including one at BMW in Munich. Currently, he works as a research assistant focusing on the automation of distribution grids and as a working student at ESFORIN SE, contributing to short-term flexibility trading of electricity.

## Alisea Joline Wigger

*Lafayette College*

Alisea Joline Wigger is currently completing her Master's degree in Communication Studies and Anglophone Studies at the University of Duisburg-Essen. Alongside her studies, she works as a dedicated flight attendant, utilizing her communication skills in an international environment. In addition to her onboard responsibilities, she has contributed to collaborative projects with several management departments, gaining insights into product development, optimization and sustainability. Post-graduation, she aims to pursue a career in the aviation industry, leveraging her skills and experiences gained from both academia and her professional endeavors.

## Partner



### Lehigh University

Lehigh University, established in 1865 in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, is a prestigious private research university recognized for its academic programs and research initiatives. With a strong commitment to innovation and entrepreneurship, Lehigh provides a dynamic environment for students and faculty.

Founded in 1988, the Iacocca Institute at Lehigh University is at the forefront of fostering innovation and entrepreneurship. For the past 25 years, the institute has enjoyed a dynamic partnership with the University Alliance Ruhr (UA Ruhr) in Germany, leveraging

collaborative efforts to enhance entrepreneurial ecosystems. By sharing best practices, promoting student exchanges, and creating joint experimental labs, the Iacocca Institute drives regional economic growth and prepares students to tackle global challenges.

This collaboration aligns with Lehigh's strategic plan, "Inspiring the Future Makers," underscoring the university's commitment to impactful, global entrepreneurial education.

Lehigh University



## Host Organizations

(in alphabetical order)



### DFG Office North America (New York, Washington DC, and San Francisco)

The DFG, headquartered in Bonn, currently funds about 32,000 research projects in all fields of science and the humanities with a budget of €3.9bn a year.

One of the DFG's principle goals is to foster the internationalization of German research. The DFG Office North America facilitates transatlantic research projects, works closely with US and Canadian funding organizations, and monitors science policy. It supports early-career researchers here on a DFG fellowship with networking events like GAIN, and



### GACC NY

The German American Chamber of Commerce, Inc. (GACCNY), situated in the bustling heart of the Financial District, has been a cornerstone of networking and growth opportunities since 1947. With a vibrant community of over 850 member companies and entrepreneurs spanning diverse industries, we foster transatlantic trade, facilitating direct connections between German and U.S. businesses.

New York City  
Chrysler Building



# Host Organizations

(continued)



## DWIH German Center for Research and Innovation New York

The German Center for Research and Innovation (DWIH) New York promotes innovation and collaboration by planning and hosting events focused on current, topical issues in science and the humanities and by taking part in conferences, science fairs, and career fairs. The DWIH New York was established in 2010 to strengthen Germany's reputation as a land of research, science, and innovation by providing a platform for leaders in science, business, tech, and the humanities to engage in transatlantic exchange and collaboration.

[dwiH-newyork.org](http://dwiH-newyork.org)



## Goethe-Institut GAPP

The *Goethe-Institut* is the globally active cultural institution of the Federal Republic of Germany. Since 1969 it promotes the study of the German language and culture in New York and encourages artistic and cultural exchange between Germany and the United States.

Established in 1972, the *German American Partnership Program (GAPP)* is a 501(c)(3) non profit organization that facilitates bilateral transatlantic exchanges between schools in the U.S. and Germany.

[goethe.de](http://goethe.de)



[goethe.de/gapp](http://goethe.de/gapp)

With 750+ U.S. schools and 400,000+ alumnae/alumni, GAPP is the largest bilateral exchange program between the U.S. and another country.



## Lafayette College

Lafayette College is an independent, academically competitive, and diverse in culture and perspective institution founded in March 1826. It offers undergraduate programs on a coeducational, residential campus rich in history and beauty. In an environment that fosters the free exchange of ideas, Lafayette College seeks to nurture the inquiring mind and to integrate intellectual, social, and personal growth.

[lafayette.edu](http://lafayette.edu)

New York City — 59th Street and Central Park



<https://pixabay.com/photos/new-york-city-skyline-cityscape-new-york/>

# Host Organizations

(continued)



## NYC Civic Engagement Commission

The NYC Civic Engagement Commission (CEC) was established by the voters of New York City as part of an amendment to the City Charter in 2018. The CEC's mission is to enhance civic participation, promote civic trust, and strengthen democracy in NYC. The CEC works to accomplish this mission through its programming, including: "The People's Money" – NYC's first-ever citywide participatory budgeting process; "Poll Site Access" – a voter engagement initiative that provides interpreters at election poll sites;

supporting Community Boards by providing trainings and resources to board members; programming and partnerships with other City agencies to increase awareness and access to city services; "The People's Bus" – a retired Corrections vehicle transformed into mobile community center.

[nyc.gov/site/civicengagement/index.page](https://nyc.gov/site/civicengagement/index.page)



## KAO USA Inc.

Kao USA Inc. is a leading manufacturer of premium beauty care brands that are recognized around the world for their innovation and quality. The Kao USA Inc. portfolio includes; Jergens® and Curél® hand and body lotions; Bioré® facial care; John Frieda® hair care, Ban® antiperspirants, as well as Goldwell, KMS and Oribe professional hair care and Molton Brown products for body and home. Founded in 1882, Kao USA Inc. is a wholly owned subsidiary of Kao Corporation.

[kao.com/americas/en/](https://kao.com/americas/en/)



## Society of Illustrators

The Society of Illustrators, founded in 1901, is America's oldest nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting the art of illustration. Its mission is to celebrate illustration's history and evolving nature through exhibitions, lectures, and education, while also serving the community. The Society's Museum of Illustration, established in 1981, offers year-round themed exhibits, art education programs, and annual juried competitions. Its Permanent Collection, featuring 2,500 cataloged pieces, is available for scholarly use and periodic display.

[societyillustrators.org](https://societyillustrators.org)

New York City — Central Park and Upper Manhattan



<https://pixabay.com/photos/manhattan-new-york-usa-america-3425664/>

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German Academic Exchange Service



**UA RUHR**

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ESSEN**

*Open-Minded*