

Dean of International Affairs at the Freie University in Berlin visits Texas A&M

Written by student intern reporter, Julia Paslavska, February 17, 2009

Dr. Wedigo de Vivanco, Dean of International Affairs at Freie University in Berlin, Germany visited Texas A&M University in mid November to discuss future exchange programs for the students and faculty between the two universities. During the three day visit, Dr. de Vivanco met with faculty members from a variety of departments around the campus, including Lieutenant General Brent Scowcroft of the Scowcroft Institute, Dr. Charles Hermann, Director of the MPIA Program at the Bush School, Dr. Robert Webb, Dean of Graduate Studies, and Dr. Guy Whitten, Director of the EU Center.

Dr. de Vivanco's visit followed a study abroad trip that a group of Bush School students and professors took to Europe last May. While in Berlin, Dr. Joseph Cerami, one of the professors on the trip, met with Dr. de Vivanco to discuss ways to strengthen the relationship between the two universities. The result of the meeting was an agreed five week study abroad program at Freie University for one of the students on the trip. JR Starch, a Masters student in International Affairs at the Bush School returned to Berlin in January and is currently studying at the University. Dr. Cerami said that Texas A&M University would like to see more of such opportunities in the future for both Texas and Berlin students.

As the Dean of International Affairs, Dr. Wedigo de Vivanco is responsible for all international relations affecting Freie University, as well as public relations and protocol. In addition to his extensive professional career at Freie University, Dr. de Vivanco has held numerous leadership positions outside of Germany, specifically in England, Canada and the United States.

During his tenure in the United States, he served on the Advisory Boards of many prestigious centers for German and European studies, including Georgetown University, Harvard University, Princeton University, and University of California – Berkeley.

Dr. de Vivanco is a veteran in establishing collaborative programs between universities. His most recent accomplishment is the establishment of Friends of Freie Universitat Berlin (FFUB) in New York City. FFBU provides support for the University's commitment to freedom in intellectual expression, academic excellence, and breakthrough research. The establishment of FFBU symbolizes the University's dedication to building strong relationships not only between American and European alumni, but also worldwide.

According to the FFUB, "Relying on its past and continued partnership with the United States of America, the Freie Universität Berlin is a principal example of transatlantic relations between the two countries, both committed and dedicated to the ideals of education and the promotion of free thought and knowledge". Dr. de Vivanco's visit to Texas A&M University reinstated the relationship between the two institutions as both parties hope to see more interaction in the future.