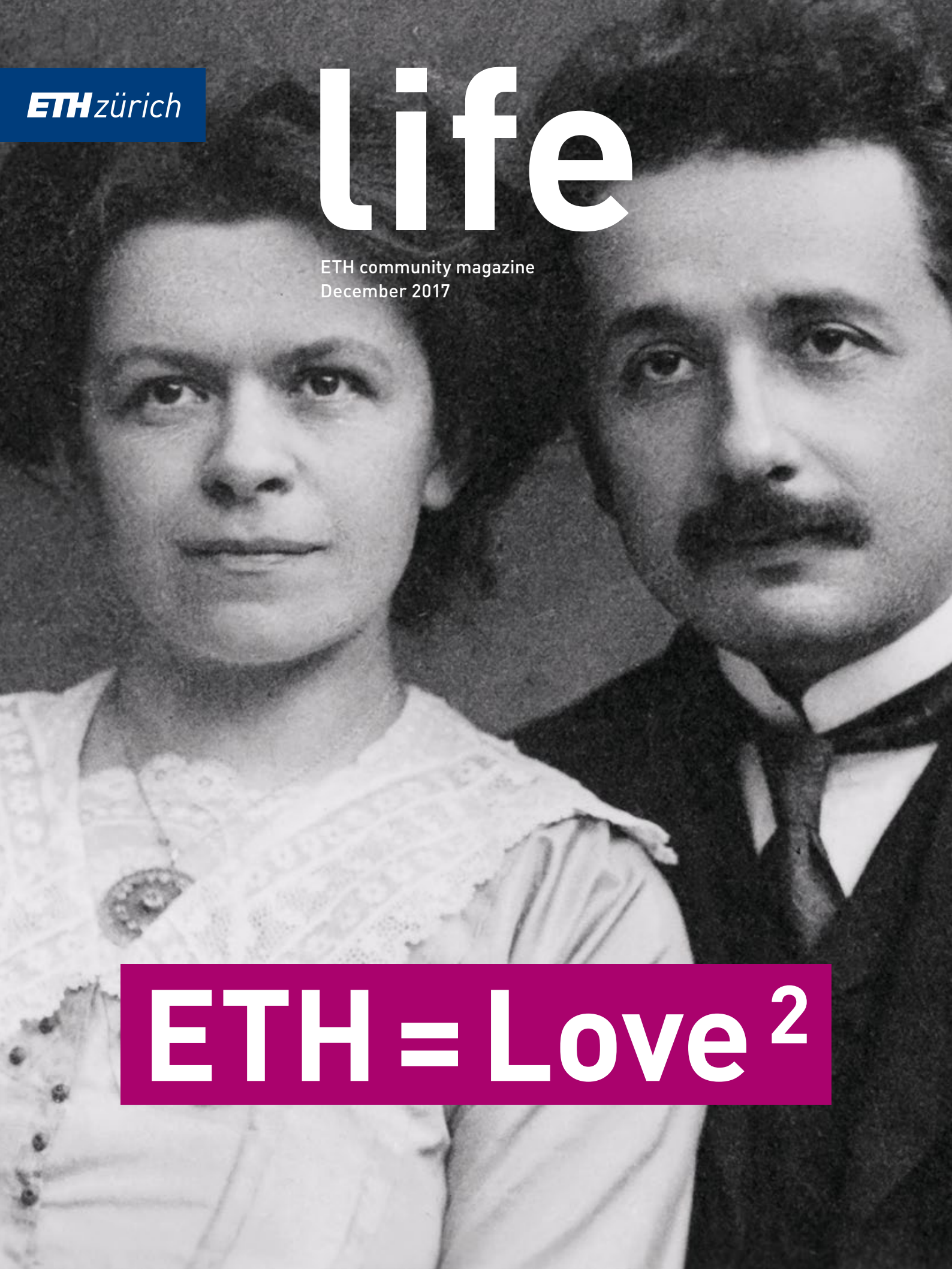
ETH zürich

life

ETH community magazine
December 2017



ETH = Love ^{2}

ETH Day 2017

Photo: Oliver Bartenschlager

Nobel Prize winners honoured

Joined by guests from research, politics and industry, ETH Zurich celebrated its 162nd anniversary on 18 November 2017. Rector Sarah Springman described how she both encourages and challenges her students, while Lino Guzzella, President of ETH Zurich, spoke about what makes the university so successful. Five researchers, including two of the Nobel Prize winners of 2017, received honorary doctorates.
www.ethz.ch/eth-day →

IT Services

From phone calls to communication

ETH is modernising its telephony system. Starting in the first quarter of 2018, IT Services will gradually introduce the Unified Communication and Collaboration (UCC) service. This not only supports "conventional" calls, but also instant messaging as well as audio, web and video conferencing on various devices.
www.ethz.ch/ucc →

Some news of our own

We want your feedback!

Do you enjoy reading *life*? What aspects do you like and what could we do better? Please send any feedback or constructive criticism you may have to life@hk.ethz.ch. All submissions will be entered into a draw to win an ETH Store voucher worth 50 francs.
www.ethz.ch/life-en →

ETH opinion platform

The Zukunftsblog reloaded

ETH experts have been writing blog posts on the topic of sustainability and publishing them on the Zukunftsblog since 2013. Now this opinion platform is expanding to cover other important topics for the university: from January 2018, ETH experts will also contribute blog posts in new columns on digitalisation and health. Sustainability will still be covered in its own dedicated column. Readers can also subscribe to the blog in the form of a newsletter.
www.zukunftsblog.ethz.ch →

"ETH plus"

In dialogue

The ETH Faculty Retreat, which took place on 10 and 11 November, was the perfect platform for an intense discussion between the Executive Board and professors about ETH Zurich's future direction. The focus was above all on debating the Executive Board's proposal to substantially increase the number of professorships in order to break into promising new areas. The Executive Board will draw up an action plan involving all the university's teaching staff and consultative bodies.
www.ethz.ch/eth-plus-en →

Photo: Heidi Hostettler

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Anna Maltsev (head), Karin Köchle (deputy head), Norbert Staub, Peter Rüegg, Florian Meyer, Meryem Riahi, Anna Focà
Layout
Evelyn Graf
Translation
Louise Killeen Translations Limited
Proofreading
Beate Marder (German), Lilian Dutoit (English)
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Digital Day 2017

Digitalisation as an opportunity

The first National Digital Day in Switzerland took place on 21 November 2017. ETH President Lino Guzzella discussed upcoming developments with other experts in various SRF broadcasts. In the main concourse of the Zurich railway station, visitors were able to play the Brainrunners game, which is controlled by means of brain-computer interfaces; bring drawings to life with an augmented creativity app; and meet Thymio the teaching robot. The many exciting events and activities on offer included a programming workshop for children.
www.digitaltag.swiss →

Zurich City University District

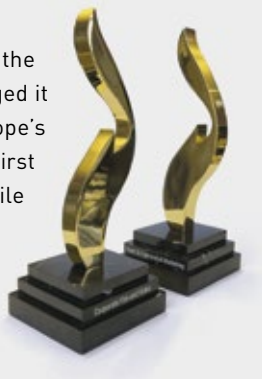
Info exhibition opened

To provide university members and the public with a better picture of the plans for the Zurich City University District, the project partners have set up an information exhibition. The exhibition shows how the University District will develop in the future. Examples of the collaboration between University Hospital Zurich, the University of Zurich and ETH Zurich are also presented.
www.hgzz.ch →

Award-winning

Two golds for ETH Zurich

Simon Ammann will be chasing his double-gold dream for the third time at the Winter Olympics, but ETH Zurich managed it on their first try at the European Excellence Awards, Europe's most prestitious communications prize. The Cybathlon won first place in the Event & Experiential Marketing category, while the university's image film "Ready?" took top honours in Corporate Film and Video.
www.eu-pr.excellence-awards.com →



Educational Development and Technology (LET)

More efficient collaboration

A new tool integrated in the Moodle learning environment has been available to ETH lecturers and students since Autumn Semester 2017. This tool (Pressbooks) enables users to work together when creating, editing and publishing their content. Further functions will be added in the coming months.
www.ethz.ch/ecollaboration →

IT security campaign

Communicate securely

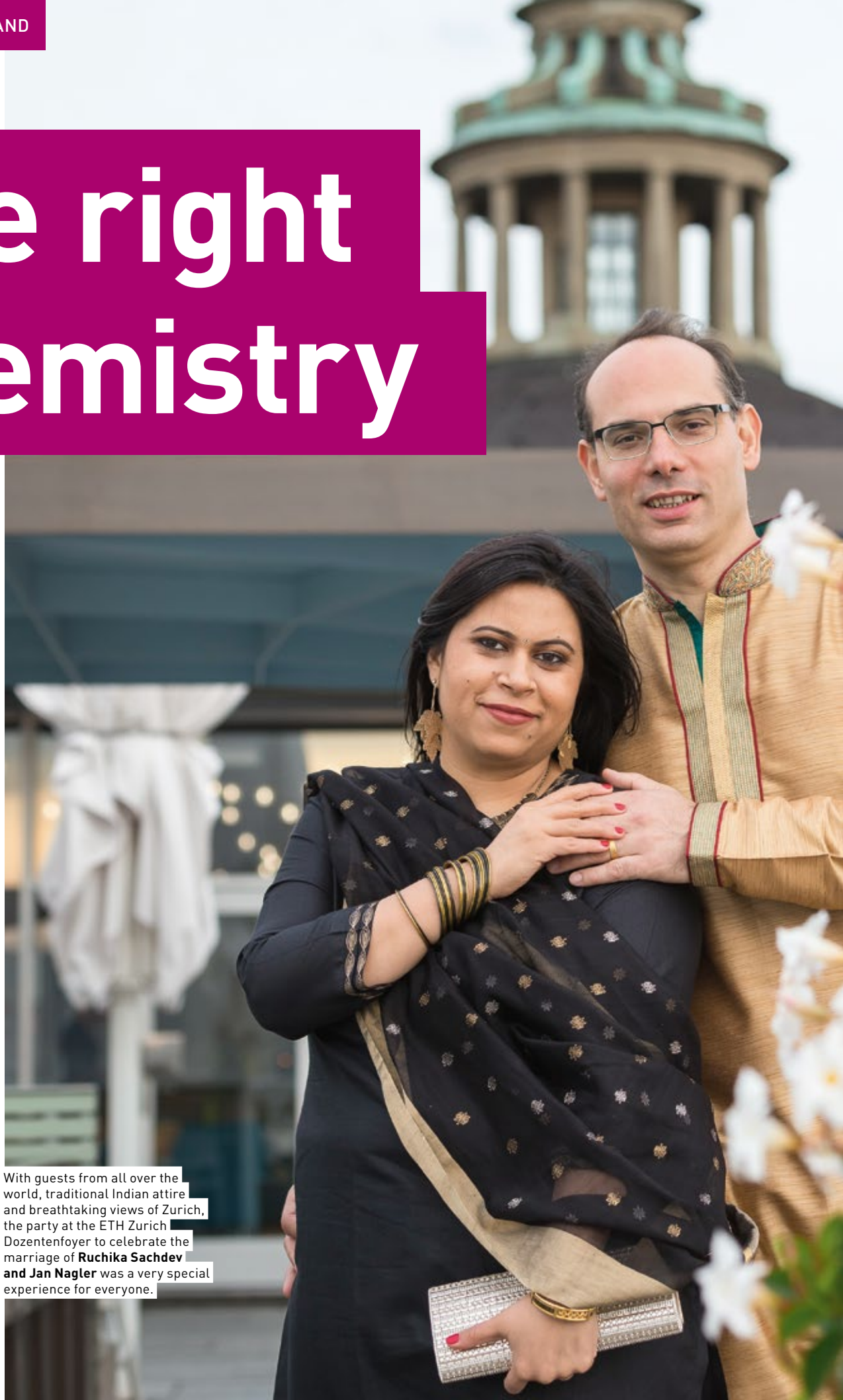
Communication by email is less secure than you might think. Like a postcard, anyone who has access to the "mail" between the sender and recipient can read it. IT Services have launched a new campaign to inform ETH members of the possible dangers relating to email and the dos and don'ts of electronic communication.
www.itsecurity.ethz.ch →

Key figure

10,000

This is the number of followers that ETH Zurich's Instagram account had attracted as of 15 November 2017. The number of followers grows by approximately 10% every month. Opened a year and a half ago, the account complements ETH's social media presence on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. The platform is now more important than Facebook for 14- to 29-year-olds. ETH therefore wants to use Instagram primarily to engage with current and future students.
www.instagram.com/ethzurich →

The right chemistry



With guests from all over the world, traditional Indian attire and breathtaking views of Zurich, the party at the ETH Zurich Dozentenfoyer to celebrate the marriage of **Ruchika Sachdev and Jan Nagler** was a very special experience for everyone.

With the celebration of love and joy at Christmas fast approaching, this time around *life* is dedicated to the topic of love. Where and how do couples meet at ETH? And what's their secret when it comes to finding love? In this issue, our cover story seeks to answer all of these questions. Happy reading and Merry Christmas!

Text Anna Maltsev, Karin Köchle and Meryem Riahi **Photos** Alessandro Della Bella

"How happy and proud I will be when the two of us together will have brought our work on relative motion to a successful conclusion! When I look at other people, then I truly realise what you are!" wrote Albert Einstein in 1901 to Mileva Marić, who would later become his first wife. How much she actually helped him in researching his world-famous theory of relativity is still disputed. What is clear, however, is that had he not studied at ETH Zurich, Einstein would probably never have met his first wife – and might not even have gone on to publish the most well-known scientific formula, $E = mc^2$. The two physicists met and fell in love when they both attended a lecture while studying at ETH between 1896 and 1900.

And even in today's world, where dating platforms abound, most studies come to the same conclusion: the majority of couples meet through their circle of friends, during their time at university or at work. There are also more than enough opportunities to meet your future love at ETH, whether in the canteen, at a lecture, at a student party or in the lab: the letters we received in response to our appeal via the internal news portal and social media revealed all. Three of these couples who met and fell in love at ETH have shared their stories with us for this edition. As different as they are, they all have one thing in common: unlike Einstein and Marić's, their love will last forever – of that they are certain.

Spellbound

"So, who are you?" said Ruchika, thinking to herself: "What a nerd!" Jan looked at her – and thought pretty much the same thing. This rather unromantic scene marked the beginning of the now two-year romance between Jan Nagler and Ruchika Sachdev. When they both arrived at ETH three years ago – she from the USA, he from Germany – they never imagined that a Halloween party one year later would change their lives completely. The post-doctoral student of biochemistry and the physicist had been introduced by friends a few weeks earlier. However, Ruchika, who arrived at the traditional Halloween party held at the Institute for Biochemistry dressed as a witch, did not recognise the guy in the devil costume straight away – and ended up sticking by his side until the party was over.

It was a week later, on their second date, that romance truly blossomed. Ruchika, who is of Indian heritage, and Jan, who is of German-Egyptian heritage, have been inseparable ever since – even outside of the university. "Our love of research is what unites us," they ▸

His lab coat was the first thing to catch her attention: lab technician **Jana Schneider** met **Reto**, then an agriculture student, at ETH around 20 years ago.

explain. Just like their similar characters. Do cultural differences ever result in problems? "Sometimes," says Jan, but they also keep things fresh. Ruchika also regularly makes things interesting by trying to catch Jan out with outlandish pranks or by planning romantic surprise getaways for him.

Both knew early on that theirs was a special kind of love – a forever kind of love. They decided to marry just one year into their relationship. And so this year, the happy couple did not attend the Halloween party at the Biochemistry Institute on 27 October, but instead were at the Dozentenfoyer of ETH Zurich – in order to celebrate their wedding.

Jan and Ruchika would also like to spend their future professional lives at ETH, perhaps even working on joint projects. "Jan develops theories and I am an experimental researcher. I would really enjoy testing his theories one day."

First, though, the newlyweds are going off on honeymoon to India and will enjoy a second wedding celebration in Ruchika's home country next year. Incidentally, their first impressions have not changed to this day: the two still affectionately refer to each other as "ETH nerds".

A slow-burn romance

"This is Reto, he's come to get the meat samples." With those very words, Jana and Reto Schneider's love story began around 20 years ago. Jana, working at the time as a laboratory technician at the Institute for Livestock Research, and agriculture student Reto had already crossed paths before at ETH. However, it was only when the then 24-year-old Reto needed to get samples analysed for his semester project that the two were formally introduced. The samples were being stored in a freezer at Tannenstrasse, where Jana worked. "I immediately noticed his lab coat – it was very unusual for a student at the time." Only later did she learn that he had borrowed it from his father.

From then on, the two of them chatted briefly whenever they met. However, it was a year later that romance finally began to blossom when Reto and his fellow students organised a party in the LFW building in order to finance their diploma trip. Having arrived at the party before her friends, Jana struck up a conversation with Reto at the bar. "We realised at that point how comfortable we were talking to one another. We can still talk for hours over a glass of wine after work, and often lose track of time." Their different daily work routines also ensure they have plenty to talk about: Reto is now a Team Leader for agricultural risks at a major insurance company and travels frequently. After working in various positions and taking a career break to raise their family, Jana returned to ETH, where she has worked as a laboratory technician in the Department of Plant Pathology for the past six years. Is communication the secret of their successful relationship, which after 17 years of marriage and two children still manages to be fresh and exciting? "Definitely. And you shouldn't set out to change the other person," adds Reto, reminiscing:

"Our interest in one another was definitely awakened after the party in the LFW building, and Jana invited me to her birthday party." But when he was unable to attend, Reto soon made up for it by accepting an invite to Jana's. Jana had planned for them to share a frozen pizza left over from the party. However, the pizza tasted so bad that neither of them could ever forget it. But on a positive note, it was that evening that Reto and Jana became a couple: "He stayed despite the pizza!"

First-year examinations lead to love

Zurich native Dragana hated beer and hoped she would never have to speak French again. The then 18-year-old initially wanted to make a swift exit when she spotted her new fellow students, one of them French-speaking Romain, sitting with two pitchers of beer in the Alumni Lounge. However, the charming chemistry student, with his twinkling eyes, persuaded her to stay.

It was soon clear to their friends that they belonged together – but Dragana and Romain were completely oblivious. With their dreaded first-year examinations looming, the two started spending more time together – albeit to study. For weeks, they crammed late into the night. "He already knew so much and was very organised. That impressed me," recalls Dragana. The hard work they both put in eventually paid off: they were the only ones in their group of friends to pass. Naturally, the happy event called for a fitting celebration. But it was not just academically that they took the next step that day. Dragana plucked up all her courage and asked Romain directly: "Are you going to kiss me already?"

A lot has happened since that day: their relationship survived Romain's exchange semester, they completed their respective ETH Master's degrees and moved in together. Now the pair are back where it all began, studying together at ETH for their next big goal. "We are both really ambitious and have always pushed each other. Now we're also going to get our doctorates in translational medicine and inorganic chemistry together," states Romain confidently.

Even outside of the university, the pair complement each other perfectly: "I'm the brains and he's the brawn," jokes Dragana. A prime example of this is when they recently assembled furniture together: "Romain wanted to work separately, as he thought it would be quicker," she recalls. However, the results left much to be desired: although Romain's pieces were tightly screwed together, they were assembled incorrectly. Meanwhile Dragana had the opposite problem: her pieces were assembled correctly, but weren't nearly secure enough. "This showed us, once again, that we work best as a team." ■

Dragana Ristanovic and **Romain Dubey** still frequent the place where they first met five years ago: the Alumni Lounge on the ETH Hönggerberg Campus.

"It was like jumping in at the deep end"

As President of the Academic Association of Scientific Staff at ETH Zurich (AVETH), neuroscientist Martin Roszkowski represents the interests of doctoral students and scientific staff at ETH Zurich. What is his view of their situation, and what has been his experience of the media interest in the allegations made in the physics department?

Text Florian Meyer, Anna Maltsev
Photo Gian Marco Castelberg

The situation of doctoral students has been discussed a lot in the media recently. You yourself are a doctoral student. How are you enjoying it at ETH?

I like it a lot. I'm doing exactly what I dreamed of doing since I was a child. My research focuses on how the effects of early childhood trauma can be inherited over multiple generations. I'm also able to try out lots of things and have the opportunity to realise my ideas.

Although you only became AVETH president in October, you were quickly called upon in your new role due to the allegations made in the former Institute for Astronomy. What was that experience like?

It definitely felt like I had unexpectedly jumped in at the deep end, despite the great advice I'd received from my predecessor. Some questions and interactions really affected me. I first had to learn that my words have greater significance, and that I'm not able live up to all the expectations placed on me. Fortunately,

About Martin Roszkowski

Martin Roszkowski (30) is a doctoral student at the Laboratory of Neuroepigenetics The Academic Association of Scientific Staff at ETH Zurich (AVETH) unanimously voted for him as president at its general assembly at the end of September.
www.aveth.ethz.ch →

however, there are many people who are passionately committed to ETH, including members of the AVETH board and of our student societies. That gives me a sense of support and security.

How do you view the situation of scientific staff in general?
On the whole, here at ETH we are working under very good conditions. We surveyed doctoral students about this and the results indicate that most are satisfied with the terms of their employment. Nevertheless, each person has their own individual concerns. If there is no progress with the difficulties someone is experiencing, AVETH is available to them as a contact point.

AVETH also surveyed doctoral students about their salaries. How did they respond?
It is important to doctoral students that the criteria used to allocate them to a salary level are uniform in the immediate environment, i.e. in the group or in the institute. These criteria do not necessarily have to be regulated uniformly throughout ETH, but they do have to be regulated in a transparent manner. On average, doctoral students are satisfied with their salaries; however, there are significant differences in satisfaction between departments.

What makes accepting a position as a doctoral student at ETH worthwhile?
That depends very much on the field. A doctorate does not have the same status in every discipline. Each and every individual must decide for themselves the extent to which this particular path will be worthwhile for them, or whether there are alternative paths that will be a better fit. In any case, the outstanding range of seminars, courses and technical equipment available at ETH provides an excellent foundation for your future career.

Doctoral students at ETH are both students and employees. Is there room for improvement?
As representatives of the scientific staff, we would like to see greater transparency with respect to which tasks belong to our doctoral studies and which tasks are part of the job. In some departments the division of responsibilities is clearly set out, in others less so. Tensions between supervisors and doctoral students can always arise. The important thing is to resolve them before they escalate. For the most part, this works fine, but ETH could focus more on this.

What is your position regarding the dual supervision of doctoral students?
Here in AVETH, we are still in the process of forming an opinion regarding supervision. We are currently surveying scientific staff. Based on the results of this survey, we would like to work together with the Rector and Vice Rector for Doctoral Studies to develop supervision guidelines for ETH. If dual supervision has proved successful in other universities, it should be discussed.

Looking beyond your doctorate, how important is it for scientific staff to have career alternatives to a professorship?
There are members of the scientific staff who enjoy working in the academic field, but do not necessarily aspire to a professorship. Career alternatives are very important to them. Their skills can also be valuable for a professorship and help ensure continuity.

And what does AVETH hope to see from the Executive Board?
We value their productive collaboration. The Executive Board supports us and intervenes in the event of problems. We hope that in future they will continue to investigate allegations, and clarify and communicate them thoroughly and transparently. Personally, I hope that the members of the scientific staff will be proactive in strengthening interaction at ETH and discussing common concerns. A healthy ETH spirit cannot be decreed – it is something that each and every one of us must cultivate. ■

Shaping the future of medicine

Now more than ever, medicine is the focus of individual and social interest – it is also in the spotlight at ETH Zurich.

Text Peter Rüegg **Illustration** Aurel Märki

Not only is the population getting older, people are now enjoying a better quality of life in their later years than in previous generations. New treatments are helping to tackle cancer and combat chronic diseases. Medicine dominates and permeates our society, creating new possibilities, but also problems and dependencies.

As a leading university for science and technology, ETH Zurich has been making a significant contribution to advancing medicine for several decades. The university engages in basic research and provides a range of educational opportunities, as well as working to develop diagnostic and therapeutic technologies and transfer them into practical and clinical applications.

One third of ETH professors

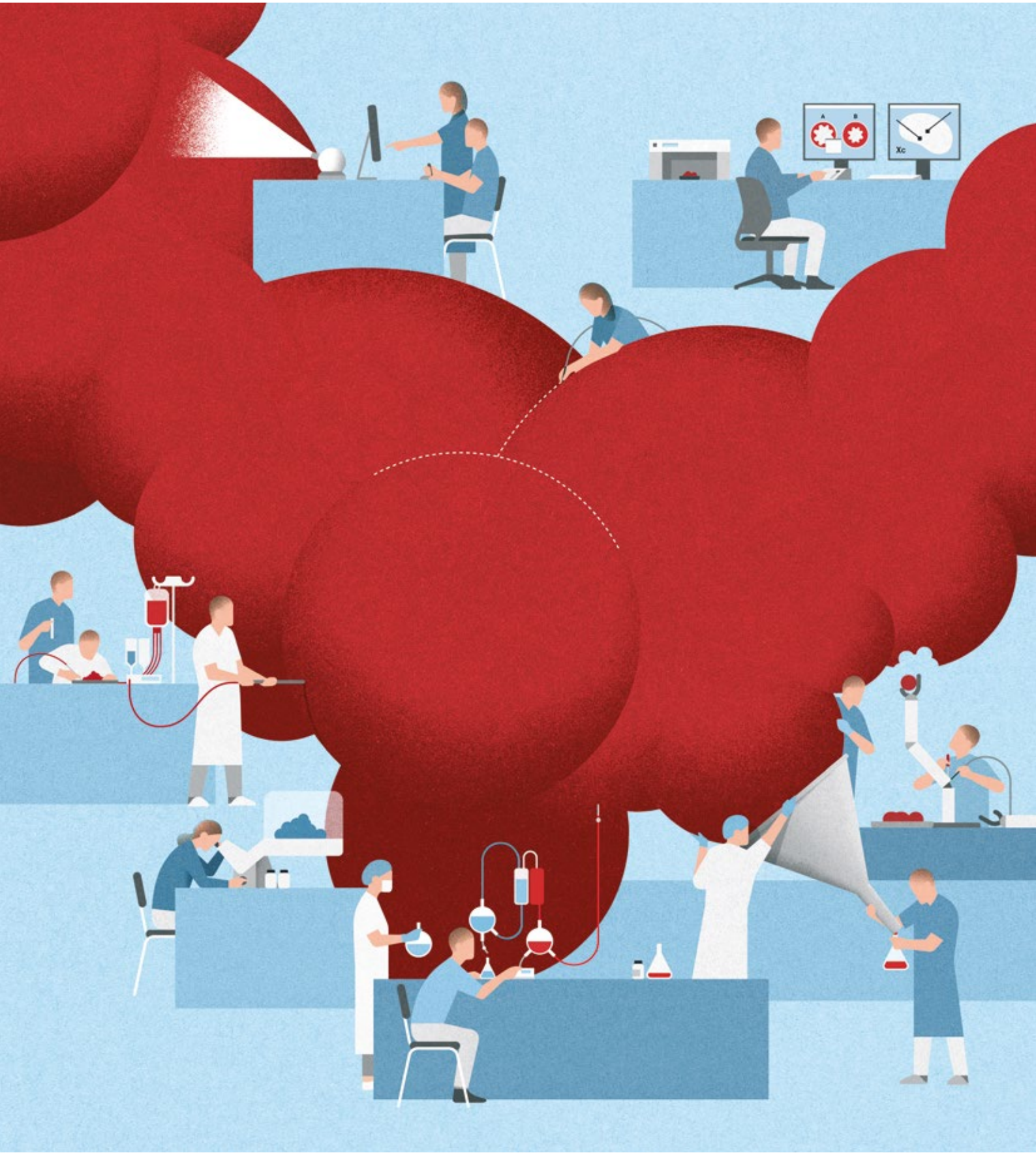
Detlef Günther, Vice President for Research and Corporate Relations, is proud of the university's strong commitment to this important field: "ETH has been working extensively and successfully in the broad field of medicine for a long time. It is a key area of focus for us, which we intend to continue in the future."

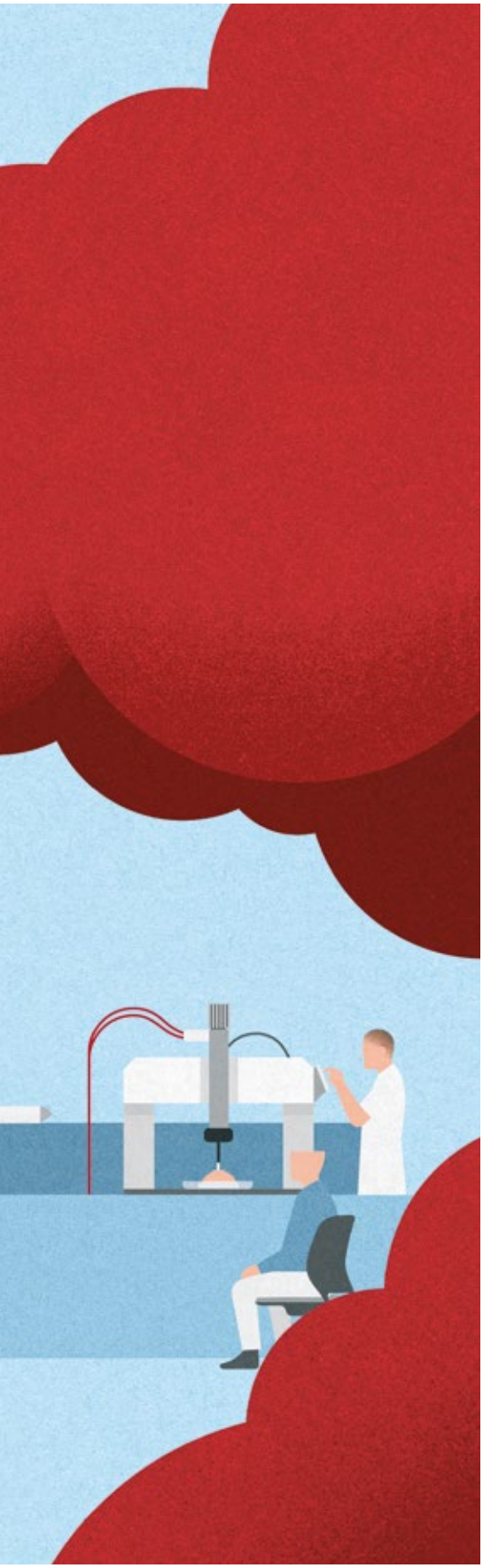
In the meantime, a third of ETH's professors in nine different departments are directly or indirectly involved in medical research. Their main activities include basic research, diagnostics, medical technologies and the development of bioactive substances.

For ETH Zurich, however, it is clear that modern medical research cannot be carried out in isolation. ETH researchers therefore work closely with medical faculties at other universities, as well as hospitals and clinics. Personalised medicine in particular requires researchers to work together across disciplines and ▸

ETH Zurich's four research specialist areas

Over the course of this four-part series, we hope to give you an insight into four research specialist areas at ETH Zurich: data science, medicine, sustainability and manufacturing technologies. In the next instalment, we will be looking at the subject of sustainability.
www.ethz.ch/main-focus-areas →





institutions. For example, computer scientists, who use data analysis and machine learning to advance the field of personalised medicine, play a vital role in medical research.

Focus on personalised medicine

ETH is also actively involved in two new Swiss initiatives to promote personalised medicine. The university plays a leading role in the ETH Board's Personalized Health and Related Technologies (PHRT) initiative. The goal of this initiative is to improve prevention and treatment, and thus the quality and efficiency of clinical medicine, through individually tailored medical interventions. This autumn, 48 project proposals were reviewed and 27 were selected for funding. The initiative has a total of 50 million Swiss francs at its disposal and researchers from all institutions in the ETH Domain can apply.

PHRT is an extension of the Swiss Personalized Health Network (SPHN) launched by the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation. ETH Zurich plays an active role in a Personalized Health Cluster, which includes university facilities and clinics situated between Basel and Zurich.

Collaboration with hospitals

ETH has been working closely with the University of Zurich and the university hospitals for some years now. Under the umbrella of University Medicine Zurich (HMZ), researchers from ETH Zurich work closely with scientists and clinicians. HMZ promotes lighthouse projects, which are carried out jointly by researchers from the participating institutions. The latest project, SleepLoop, which was presented to the public in November, involved the development of a wearable system that stimulates the brain with an auditive tone to improve sleep quality.

In order to share the knowledge gained from the project with the clinic as quickly as possible, the University launched a new institute in the Department of Health Sciences and Technology at the beginning of the year: the Institute of Translational Medicine. Established at the end of 2014, the "Wyss Translation Center", which is operated jointly by ETH and the University of Zurich, shares a similar goal. Here, the transfer of results from fundamental research to applications for the healthcare sector is also of central importance.

Last but not least, ETH supports the rapid transfer of healthcare technologies into medical practice through the foundation of spin-off companies. Around 20 percent of all of ETH's patents and spin-offs are based on potential medical applications.

New Bachelor's in medicine

ETH Zurich is also strengthening its focus on medicine in teaching and education: since the summer, students can also study medicine at the university. The first degree programme started with 100 students. The Bachelor's degree programme is part of a joint education initiative with the universities of Basel and Zurich, and Università della Svizzera Italiana. The partner universities will take the graduates into their Master's programmes.

The curriculum for the Bachelor's in medicine is based on the new Swiss Catalogue of Learning Objectives for Medical Training, which applies to all medical training courses in Switzerland as of this autumn. The degree content will be supplemented by an ETH-specific immersion in scientific and technical principles.

For a number of years now, ETH has also offered degree programmes that border medicine and technical sciences, such as the Master's in health sciences and technology with a specialisation in medical technology.

"Medical development is strongly driven by basic research and technology," says ETH Vice President Detlef Günther. ETH is traditionally strong in these areas and will therefore play an increasingly important role in medicine, particularly by bridging the gap: "Natural sciences, engineering sciences and medicine have different cultures and speak different languages. We are actively bringing these worlds together." ■

The foodLAB restaurant in the ETH CAB building will soon have an all-day takeaway counter.

Flexible dining

Text Norbert Staub **Photo** Giulia Marthaler

Following the completion of catering developments on the Hönggerberg campus between 2010 and 2016, the focus now turns to the Zentrum campus. There are new features and renovations planned for the restaurant in the CAB building, the Bistro in the CHN building and the Dozentenfoyer in the main building.

Changes are also being made to the culinary offerings available on the Hönggerberg campus: the WoKa restaurant in the HIT building will be operated by the Two Spice catering group, who are taking over from Eldora. Following minor renovation work, the restaurant is scheduled to reopen in spring 2018 under the new name Rice Up!. As the name suggests, the restaurant will continue to offer high-quality Asian fusion cuisine at reasonable prices. "This fits in perfectly with our site strategy of offering a varied and attractive mix of culinary options on the Hönggerberg campus," says Robert Perich, ETH Vice President for Finance and Controlling and Head of the Catering Commission. "Our focus is on offering options that work well together."

Space for eating, working and events

At the Zentrum campus, the end of the Eldora contract offers an opportunity to adapt the current foodLAB restaurant in the former chemistry building (CAB) to the changed needs of its users. On the one hand, the Department of Computer Science urgently needs more meeting rooms and permanently accessible workspaces for students. On the other hand, the location also needs to provide space for a comfortable meeting spot and for events. In future, it will therefore be possible to subdivide the whole space and use it flexibly.

"The Catering Commission always endeavours to respond to new catering trends. The growing popularity of takeaway and street food will be suitably reflected in our new catering services," says Perich. In the CAB restaurant, there will be an all-day takeaway counter in addition to menus. As the ETH Vice President explains: "It was particularly important to me that all ETH user groups were involved in the deliberations. In this way, their different needs could best be met." The reopening of the restaurant is scheduled for summer 2018. A wider choice of options will be available in the CHN Bistro next door; however, no structural changes are being made here.

Dozentenfoyer temporarily closed

The Dozentenfoyer in the Main Building, which was remodelled four years ago, has been due to have its roof, goods lift and ventilation system refurbished for some time now. Due to the work being carried out, the restaurant will remain closed for around two months. It will reopen its doors on 5 March 2018. As an alternative, guests can visit the Polysnack in the Main Building, the Clausiusbar in the CLA building or Bellavista at Hönggerberg. ■

Catering renovation work

Restaurant	Closure	Reopening
WoKa, HIT (Hönggerberg)	30 November 2017	Spring 2018
foodLAB, CAB (Zentrum)	30 November 2017	Summer 2018
CHN Bistro (Zentrum)	30 November 2017	19 February 2018
Dozentenfoyer (Zentrum)	22 December 2017	5 March 2018

Sustainable catering at ETH

In line with its Climate Programme, ETH Zurich intends to reduce CO_2 emissions in campus catering. The catering companies qualified for the task, SV Group and Compass Group, have set a reduction target of ten percent within three years. The programme will commence in January 2018. It is the cornerstone of a sustainability programme which will encompass aspects such as animal welfare and water consumption in future. The initiative is the result of the Sustainable Catering project jointly led by ETH Seed Sustainability and the World Food System Center.

100 percent commitment to students

Lukas Reichart
President of the Association of Students at ETH Zurich (VSETH)

Text Karin Köchle **Photo** Florian Bachmann

Music or computer science? Having played the flute in a chamber orchestra for many years, Lukas Reichart ultimately had to decide which direction to pursue at university. He chose to study the latter and soon also became actively involved in the student society for computer science. Despite his apparently reserved nature, the 22-year-old has been a passionate advocate for the issues affecting his fellow students ever since finishing school. And he also wants to motivate others to take on responsibility themselves. In order to be able to devote his full attention to the students, Reichart decided to put his studies on hold for a year. As President of VSETH, he has been championing student interests in higher-education politics since September. "The great thing about university politics is that you get the opportunity to talk to so many different people. The spectrum of opinions is very broad, especially regarding the current topic of tuition fees." With around 15,000 members, VSETH is one of the most active student associations in Switzerland. In an organisation of this size, surely there is some infighting on occasion? "Definitely not. A person's political views and their background are neither here nor there," says Reichart. "We all share a common goal and that is to actively improve the learning experience for students." ■

www.vseth.ethz.ch →

Janet Hering
WPF Chairwoman

Illustration: Kornel Stadler

Why do we need a Women Professors Forum?

The answer is simple: we – women professors in the ETH Domain and at ETH Zurich – are too few. In 2016, only 11% of the tenured full and associate professors were women. This statistic is better for assistant professors (23% in 2016), but this includes temporary posts that do not have a long-term perspective at ETH Zurich.

The ETH Women Professors Forum (WPF) aims to increase the visibility of women lecturers and researchers across the 16 academic departments. WPF members show that there are many ways for women to be successful in science. We have different experiences in both our professional and personal lives. Some of us have worked in industry, some have spin-off companies, some have children, some have or have had major commitments outside academia.

But we also have one thing in common: we want to serve as role models for our students, doctoral students and postdoctoral researchers, not least through the wide range of careers that our various backgrounds show to be possible. Sharing experiences and information with each other also increases our trust in our own abilities and career goals, which is especially important for women in departments with lower proportions of women faculty.

The WPF also sets an excellent example of cooperation within the ETH Domain. Although it started in 2012 as an association of women professors at ETH Zurich, the WPF is now open to women professors at EPFL and the four research institutes of the ETH Domain (PSI, Empa, Eawag and WSL).

The WPF is pleased to cooperate with the Office of Equal Opportunities, which promotes gender diversity at ETH Zurich through programmes and institutional measures. The WPF plays a complementary role in this by sharing our experiences and showing how women can succeed in science and in leadership roles.

Many of us have experienced firsthand the problems of gender stereotyping and unconscious bias. In addition to supporting women, we aim to raise people's awareness of these issues – and thereby to improve the academic environment for everyone. ■

Janet Hering

About Janet Hering

Janet Hering is the Chairwoman of the ETH Women Professors Forum (WPF). She is the Director of Eawag and a Professor at both ETH Zurich and EPFL.
www.eth-wpf.ch →

20 years of ETH juniors

Between university and business

ETH juniors, one of ten companies run by ETH students, celebrates its 20th birthday this year. The student company completes around 70 projects a year for companies in the fields of digitalisation, market research and innovation, and employs ETH students to carry out the work. The students work on a freelance basis and gain valuable, paid work experience.

Last year, for example, ETH juniors handled a market research project for inspire (the centre of excellence for technology transfer from ETH to industry) to assess the energy efficiency of machine tools. The project won the Best Consulting Project award from the umbrella organisation for Swiss junior enterprises.

Through collaborative projects like this, the ETH juniors create added value for the business and generate an annual turnover of 1 million Swiss francs. In addition, team members acquire entrepreneurial skills during their studies. Numerous successful spin-offs, such as GetYourGuide, Climeworks and Teralytics, have already emerged from the ranks of former ETH juniors.

Since 2015, a proportion of the revenue generated by ETH juniors has been channelled into a fund that finances start-up ideas from current and former members of the team. We can therefore look forward to many new innovative spin-offs and exciting projects, and hope to celebrate another 20 successful years of ETH juniors providing the bridge between university and business.

Robin Bloch, ETH student and Project Manager at ETH juniors
www.ethjuniors.ch →

The first-ever ALEA Award

The first ALEA Award for outstanding leadership was presented this year by the Academic Association of Scientific Staff at ETH Zurich (AVETH), the Office of Equal Opportunities and the Human Resources department. Of the 36 nominations received, one stood out in particular: Professor Renato Renner, head of the Quantum Information Theory Group in the Department of Physics. The first-ever recipient of the ALEA Award fulfils the criteria for exemplary leadership in the best sense of the word and shows, for example, that flexible working hours and top research can go hand in hand. Many congratulations! (Photo: Andreas Schlumpf, VAW)

www.ethz.ch/alea-award →